**District 5190**

**Achievement Beyond Obstacles**

**Toolbox**

Achievement Beyond Obstacles (ABO) was started by Reno South RC in 1996 and has evolved significantly since that time. Now, four Area 8 clubs co-sponsor the program and it has developed into a substantial program with several aspects. The Area 8 Team continues to add components to this program. While this works well for Area 8 with the large number of resources it has and history building this program, it is not necessarily where other Rotary Clubs and Areas might want to start an ABO program. This document lists various aspects of the Area 8 program as separate tools that are part of the toolbox that a Rotary Club or Area can choose from to build a program that fits their clubs and community. In addition to the Area 8 components, this toolbox also contains components the Sebastopol RC uses in their program called, Overcoming Obstacles Awards, and newer ideas that have been tried by the national Horatio Alger Association that both sponsor scholarships to youth from a similar demographic.

Below are components divided into categories. Not all categories need to be included in a program. In addition, most programs will start small and add components as they learn what works for them.

**Criteria for Selection**

* High school senior, graduating this year, having overcome some major life challenges and having the ability to succeed at the next level. (Area 8 and Sebastopol RC)
* Mindset that looks to growth of skills and abilities as opposed to a fixed mindset that things cannot be changed. In addition, they grade the applications based on 40% adversity overcome, 40% financial need, 10% community service and 10% display integrity and commitment to complete a college degree (Horatio Alger)

**Youth Selection Process**

* Educate school staff, especially counselors, about ABO program and have them select candidates that fit your criteria. (Area 8)
* Work with school counselors to educate them about ABO and have the counselors solicits applications from all students that fit the criteria. Committee then reviews the applications and selects 6 students. (Sebastopol RC)
* Reach out directly to youth that fit this demographic via email, social media, scholarship listing websites and other organizations in your community (examples being Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, etc). Applications are reviewed by individuals to make the final selections. (Horatio Alger)

**Leadership Training (personal leadership)**

* Hire professional staff to lead leadership program over multiple days to help youth build self-confidence, better learn about themselves and make better decisions. (Area 8)
* Identify successful members of your community that have overcome major life challenges in their youth and have them spend a few hours with the students to let them see they can also succeed. (Sebastopol RC)

**Speeches**

* Students present to Rotary Club in a short speech (3 to 5 minutes) what their challenge was, how they overcame it and where they are going now. (Area 8 and Sebastopol RC)

**Financial Training**

* Workshop on how to manage the cost of attending post high school education led by a Rotarian or a Financial Aid professional. (Area 8)

**College Applications and FAFSA**

* Workshop in a computer lab with Financial Aid professionals and Rotarians helping youth complete these forms. Requires parents or guardians to be in attendance with appropriate documentation on financial status. Good to have day care service for younger siblings and/or translation services available. (Area 8)

**First Year Scholarships**

* Students are selected for interviews based on their speeches and information provided on their counselor’s nomination form. Based on the interviews and their need, scholarships are awarded. (Area 8)
* Scholarships are awarded by a committee reviewing their application and a $1000 is granted to all that are selected. One student is given an additional $1000 based on their Rotary Club Speech. (Sebastopol RC)
* Students are awarded a scholarship based on application that include student completed form, third party supporting letter (not counselor), evidence of financial need, and a transcript. These scholarships are for 4 years and continue as long as student maintains acceptable GPA and stays in school. (Horatio Alger)

Ask college Financial Aid Departments if they will match the at least ABO Scholarship. (Horatio Alger)

**Future Years Scholarships**

* Additional scholarships are available but require letter explaining request and current transcript. (Area 8)
* Scholarships are awarded for a full 4 years. (Horatio Alger)

**Mentoring**

* Work with another organization (Deans Future Scholars) to have their youth mentor awardees. (Area 8)
* Have program alumni mentor the awardees while in school and after as needed. (Horatio Alger and Area 8 starting this effort)
* Have Rotarians mentor the students with at least monthly meetings. While young people mentoring the awardees is very important and effective, Rotarians with all their life experiences bring a very different and important component to the awardees. (Area 8 and Sebastopol RC)