

Scholarship Commission Creates One-Stop Shop for Students

By Brian Stimson
Of The Skanner News

Last week, a group of IT professionals were frantic. Every year for 15 years, the small group awards a scholarship to a high school senior in Oregon or Washington who is pursuing a degree in technology.

This year, they had had zero applicants. "Hard to believe since we are giving away money, and no one is interested," wrote Walter Yeaw. "What's wrong?"

It's impossible to know how many scholarships go unused or underused – with, say, only one applicant – but one Oregon commission is helping to ensure scholarships are as widely available as ever.

Every year, the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, helps distribute about \$17 million in scholarship awards to Oregon residents pursuing higher education. Of the 400 or so scholarship programs that the commission administers, not one

went unawarded, says executive director Josette Green.

"Our agency is unique across the nation," she said.

To apply for any of the scholarships administered by the commission, a student needs to fill out only one application. That common application is then used for any of the scholarships they are eligible, although some require additional application materials, such as essays. Awards range from small \$500 gifts to those that cover the entire cost of a 4-year education.

Unfortunately for students starting in the fall, the deadline for this year passed on March 1. But don't despair, says Green. It just means students have that much time to prepare for next year, which has its advantages.

Applications received by the "early bird" date of Feb. 15 are eligible for money not available to applicants who wait to the last minute.

Despite having more than about 11,000

applicants each year, Green says they're interested in reaching out to many more Oregon students. Because the commission handles Oregon Opportunity Grants and other financial aid, they receive over 180,000 FAFSA forms.

So why aren't more students applying for scholarships?

Green says it comes down to a number of factors.

"Students self-select themselves out," she says.

Many believe their GPA isn't high enough or that the awards only go to the top students in the class. Not true, says Green, who says many scholarships are awarded to mid-

dle of the road students.

Reason number 2 that students don't take the time to apply: Time. Green said some students are put off by the notion of writing an essay or filling out the (one) application it takes for Oregon residents (many scholarships are eligible to current Oregon residents who are attending schools out of state).

And reason number 3: Ignorance. Many students simply aren't aware of the many pots of money that are waiting to be awarded to them.

"Students here are very fortunate," she said. "Other states do not have this resource."

Free Food-Sharing Workshops

A free hands-on workshop about all things related to food from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 21, at the Brentwood-Darlington Community Center, 7211 SE 62nd Ave. Choose from one of five interactive projects to engage in for the morning.



The workshops will include information about growing plants from seed; skills for growing and homebrewing kombucha and other teas; calculating and planning food stores; growing, pruning and harvesting fruits; and container gardening to maximize small spaces.

We'll come back together as a group to share experiences and a delicious lunch. Open to anyone interested. RSVP required by Monday, May 16th to outreach@ourunitedvillages.org or 503.546.7499.

Child care (9 and under), transportation, and interpretation provided upon request. Sponsored by Community Outreach of Our United Villages. For more information visit www.ouvcommunityoutreach.org.

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