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REALTORS OFFER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

One of the best kept secrets in the Diablo Valley is the CCAR Scholarship Foundation. Formed in 1967 by the Contra Costa Association of Realtors, the Scholarship Foundation has awarded nearly a million dollars in college scholarship grants to eligible students attending colleges all over the world. In the last six years alone over \$350,000 has been awarded to 125+ students attending universities from California to New York to London and everywhere in between.

The CCAR Scholarship Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization governed by eleven trustees all of whom have a passion for enabling higher education; many have been Foundation volunteers for ten years or more. Why such dedication? Plain and simple: it's because of the students. Foundation President Tom Hart sums it up this way, "Realtors give back to their communities in many ways but this has got to be the most gratifying volunteer position within our association; having the opportunity to interview such talented young people and help them underwrite the cost of their college educations is worth every minute of the work behind the scenes to make it all happen."

The eligibility requirements for consideration are: 1) The student must be a resident of central Contra Costa County; 2) Already be enrolled full-time in college (not an incoming freshman); 3) Have a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average and an emphasis of study in business, accounting, finance, marketing and/or real estate.

Hart is quick to admit that the foundation trustees and their selection process are a bit of a throwback to the old days when more was expected of a student than just an on-line application. "After all

transcripts and letters of recommendations are collected, we then personally interview the students so that we can get to know each individually," Hart explains. The final step in the process is an invitation to the annual Scholarship Awards luncheon held at the Blackhawk Country Club where each student scholarship award winner takes a turn speaking to the audience of over 300 contributors, parents and dignitaries. By the end of the awards luncheon, each student's personality, ambition and poise is self-evident to all. "The parents of the students are very grateful not only for the financial boost but also for the interview and speaking experience their child gets from the overall process," Hart says.

The Contra Costa Association of Realtors, headquartered in Walnut Creek, initially funded the Foundation over 40 years ago. Since then, generous contributions from individual agents, their families and from affiliate service vendors to the real estate profession such as mortgage brokers, banks, title & escrow companies, house inspectors, stagers, painters and home warranty & insurance providers have allowed the Foundation to continue its mission of helping families in the Diablo Valley pay for the ever-increasing cost of a college education.

Hart concludes, "This worthy endeavor is an investment in everyone's future; if anyone is interested in becoming a contributor or knows a student who may be eligible for scholarship consideration, I encourage you to contact any Foundation trustee or visit our website."

The application deadline for 2011 is April 15th; all application and contributor info can be found on www.ccarscholarship.com

Photos: L, 2010 Student Scholarship Award Winners. R, Front Row: left to right: Mary Chatton Brown, Bette Sue Schack, Paulina McGill, Julie Sullivan, Lynda Dimond (vice-president). Back Row: left to right: Tom Hart (president), Laura Hudelson, Diane Harrison, Long Nguyen (secretary), Katey Shinn, Paul Zuvella (treasurer)

