

## **Local scholarships have a HUGE impact**

At last week's Abilene High School Achievement Banquet, amidst much anticipation, scholarship recipients were recognized. Many of those, come from local sources.

Families establish some, other scholarships are awarded by past graduating classes or as memorials; some are bestowed by local organizations or businesses.

Scholarships come in all amounts, ranging from \$200 to \$8,000. With the high cost of post-secondary education, every dollar certainly helps.

Trevor Witt, recipient of the Moyer Brothers scholarship, is incredibly thankful for the support he has received. He said, "I will be able to focus on learning and not have to worry about finances. Even after I graduate, I will not have to worry about the many loans I would have had to incur because of the generous support from this community."

The Community Foundation of Dickinson County, Inc. manages and administers the funds for a sizeable number of the Abilene area scholarships. Kristine Meyer, foundation president, commented on one of their latest endowments, "The Woodrow and Esther Tyrell Scholarship was established because the Tyrells believed strongly in access to higher education for local youth with financial need. The Tyrells didn't have children of their own, but through their scholarship, which is endowed and will assist local students into perpetuity, they are going to impact the lives of countless students and future generations in ways that we can only imagine."

While scholarship donors, or those who administer the funds, may set their own criteria for scholarships — character, leadership, and service are the core values that generally define those guidelines. Of course, academic achievement and financial need are also considerations.

Sometimes the stipulations are based on athletic prowess while some narrow down applicants by specifying that the receiver attend a certain college or that they select a particular major; others allow those pursuing a degree in a technical education field to apply.

It seems to me that those scholarship standards help set a positive tone for student achievement. While our school district encourages students to do their best and to be self-motivated, local scholarships certainly provide additional incentives. They offer external awards that help reinforce educational ideals and encourage students to become involved in their school and community.

Sandy Dutt, counselor at Abilene High School noted, "Our graduates and this year's Class of 2013 are blessed to have the generous scholarship support of the Abilene Community. This class has worked very hard to apply for many scholarships and approximately forty students will have a tremendous jump start on financing their education, thanks to the generosity of scholarship donors.

Find a complete list of those students that have received local scholarships on my USD 435 webpage ([http://www.abileneschools.org/page/36567\\_2](http://www.abileneschools.org/page/36567_2)). And, please join me in thanking all those who invest in our youth through scholarship awards.