

Retaining local talent scholarship's goal

By JIM DINO
Staff Writer

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Prospective local college students who are interested in a technical or medical career — and would like to stay and work in the Hazleton area after graduating — have an opportunity for a scholarship.

The Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership is offering \$6,000 — \$3,000 a year for two years — to any local student who wants to pursue an education that will match a job need in the area.

Jack St. Pierre, chairman of the partnership's scholarship committee, said the main reason the scholarship was established was to stop young people from leaving the area to work and live.

In fact, recipients have to sign a contract with the partnership to remain employed in the Hazleton area for a minimum of three years.

"We want to keep the kids coming back to the area after they graduate," St. Pierre said. "Local manufacturers need people

with technical training." The scholarship is open to people who want to pursue a one-, two- or four-year program.

Typical one-year programs include industrial maintenance technician, manufacturing technology, electronics technology, computer technology and industrial technology.

Two-year programs that are applicable include computer engineering, manufacturing engineering and production technology.

People in these jobs locally would be servicing, troubleshooting and repairing sophisticated manufacturing machinery and systems; installing manufacturing systems, many of which are computer-operated, and doing preventive maintenance.

For the last two years, the scholarships have been extended to students pur-

suing various careers in the medical field, because of the shortage of trained people in that field.

Also, if someone is pursuing education that would lead to a job at the Tobyhanna Army Depot in Monroe County, they would also be eligible for the grant.

Scholarship candidates must live within the boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District, MMI Preparatory School, Weatherly Area School District and Marian High School in Hometown.

They must be in good academic standing and must achieve a 2.75 or equivalent grade-point average to renew the

scholarship. If they fall below 2.75, they have one semester to catch up.

Applications are due May 15, with an anticipated June 1 notification.

Those who apply will have to write an essay on why they want to live and work in the Hazleton area after graduation. They must also list their employment and civic involvement.

Anyone interested in applying can contacting

Bob Skulsky, the partnership's director, at the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce at 455-1509, or via the Internet at www.hazletonchamber.org or www.civicpartnership.com.

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