



Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership wants to better publicize scholarship program

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The Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership's effort to create educational opportunities for people who want to stay in the area after receiving their education needs publicity, committee members feel.

The Scholarship Committee met this week to discuss how to better publicize the program – not only to find prospective scholarship winners, but also to fund the effort.

Jack St. Pierre, chairman of the committee, said very little response has been received from the local business community to contribute to the scholarship fund. Some 160 letters containing a plea for donations were sent out some time ago, and St. Pierre said only a few were answered.

The aim of the committee is to make the fund endow itself – in other words, have enough money that it can be invested, and be self-sustaining – as well as offering more than one scholarship per year.

But, the more pressing need at this time is getting students to know about it, so they can apply for it.

The committee intends to award its second scholarship in June, and has just about two months to find a new winner.

Those eligible for a scholarship must be pursuing a degree or certification in a two- or four-year accredited program of study. The committee wants to assist students who are pursuing an education in a field in which there are job opportunities available in the Hazleton area.

Some of the typical two-year programs include industrial maintenance technician, manufacturing technology, electronics technology, computer technology and industrial technology.

Typical four-year programs include computer engineering, manufacturing engineering and production technology.

Candidates must also reside within the boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District or Weatherly Area School District, must achieve a minimum 2.75 grade-point average, must demonstrate employability and the desire to satisfy local employer needs.

Candidates must also demonstrate a sincere desire to return to the Hazleton area to begin their employment careers. They must sign a contract with the Partnership to remain in the area for three years after graduation.

St. Pierre said jobs available in those fields are paying up to \$15 per hour.

Applications are due May 1.

Those interested in applying can contact the Partnership's executive director, Bob Skulsky, at the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce office at 455-1508, or on the Internet at www.hazletonchamber.org.