

'Stay-here-to-work' scholarship available

By JIM DINO
Staff Writer

If local students are willing to stay and work in the area for three years after graduation, they may be eligible for a scholarship.

The deadline is fast approaching for the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership's Scholarship program.

In recent years, a small number of applications were turned in for the scholarships and partnership officials felt it was because of the stay-here-to-work requirement.

Bob Skulsky, the partnership's executive director, said partnership officials realize it may be difficult — especially in the current economy — for a student to agree to stay here to work, if they can't find a job.

Skulsky said it has happened in the past and the student was asked to repay the scholarship under reasonable terms.

Skulsky likened the scholarship, in those instances, to a student loan.

The partnership's scholarship offers \$6,000 — \$3,000 for two years — to any local student who wants to pursue an education that will match a job need in the Hazleton area.

The scholarship is open to students pursuing a one-year, two-year, or four-year program, in a wide range of fields — industrial technology, computer engineering, manufacturing engineering and production technology, industrial maintenance technician, manufacturing technology, electronics technology, computer.

The partnership's scholarship is also open to students pursuing various careers in medical fields, because of the shortage of trained people in those field.

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And students who find a job at the Tobyhanna Army Depot are also eligible, because those jobs are well-paying, technical jobs.

Local scholarship candidates must also reside within the boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District, MMI and the Weatherly Area School District, and Marian High School in Hometown. Students must maintain a 2.75 grade-point average, or equivalent average in order to renew the scholarship. If they fall below 2.75, they have one semester to catch up.

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

Those interested can apply to Skulsky at the Greater Hazleton Chamber

of Commerce at 455-1509, or via the Internet at www.hazletonchamber.org.

Skulsky also pointed out those eligible for the local scholarship could possibly get a similar state scholarship.

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) is offering a scholarship for students to live and work in Pennsylvania.

The state scholarship provides up to \$3,000 per year, maximum, and is meant for sophomore students enrolled in approved science, technology and allied health fields. They have to be employed in Pennsylvania one year for each year they get the scholarship.

On the web: www.civicpartnership.com

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