



Community Foundation of Wabash County

We're here for giving. We're here for good.

Press Release

P.O. Box 98, 218 E. Main Street
N. Manchester, IN 46962

Phone: 260/982-4824

Fax: 260/982-8644

Website: www.cfwabash.org

E-mail: marketing@cfwabash.org

Contact: Maryhelen Chadwick (mhchadwick@yahoo.com)

For Release: 4/9/2009



Op-ed piece by: Community Foundation of Wabash County Assistant Director Shelly Leifer

21st Century Scholar Program benefits students, community

Today's economy is forcing all of us to seek opportunities that we may not have spent time or energy investigating before. And that may not be a bad thing. How many of you know what the 21st Century Scholar program is and how it benefits all of us?

Raising the educational level of our own children, our neighbors, children at church—any students you know—will be a vital component of building a better future for our community. People we all know can take advantage of this program—but far too few are doing so. The 21st Century Scholar program began in 1990 and aims to ensure that all Indiana families can afford a college education for their children. However, only 19 percent of the approximately 460 potentially eligible sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders currently are enrolled in this very accessible program.*

The Community Foundation of Wabash County and local school superintendents recently convened principals and guidance counselors from all three Wabash County school corporations, along with our Wabash County 21st Century Scholarship representative, to create a county-wide plan to enroll all eligible Wabash County sixth-, seventh- and eighth- grade students in the 21st Century Scholars Program before the June 30, 2009 deadline.



The group heard about the program's benefits firsthand from **Alyssa Mobley** of North Manchester. Mobley is currently a junior at Huntington University. She is pursuing a double major in elementary education and middle school mathematics education.

"I have always wanted to be a teacher, so when it came time to pick a career, I never second guessed myself," says Mobley, "I love being a leader, and the opportunity to make a positive impact on students thrills me."

Mobley learned from her older brothers' example how the 21st Century Scholars program could help her achieve her goals.

"My two older brothers signed up for the 21st Century Scholars Program

Alyssa Mobley

when they were in junior high, so my parents made sure I applied in junior high,” Mobley says, “My family includes five children. My parents’ jobs would be fine to support a family of three or four, but in a family of seven, money can be tight sometimes.”

All income-eligible sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders who enroll in the program and fulfill a pledge of good citizenship to the state are guaranteed the cost of four years of undergraduate college tuition at any participating public college or university in Indiana. If the student attends a private institution, the state will award an amount comparable to that of a public institution. If the student attends a participating proprietary school, the state will award a tuition scholarship equal to that of Ivy Tech Community College. Anyone who qualifies for the free and reduced lunch program is strongly encouraged to apply to be a 21st Century Scholar.

And anyone who knows students who might qualify—even though middle-school and junior high school might seem too early to be thinking about college—should encourage those students to find out more about this program. We can all make a difference in this endeavor.

Information and applications are available at all Wabash County middle and junior high schools (ask guidance counselors or principals), from the Kokomo Regional Support Program office at Indiana University Kokomo (Call toll free 800-213-0165) or online at www.scholars.in.gov.

Mobley recognizes not only the opportunity but the practical benefit of being a 21st Century Scholar.

“The Scholars program means ‘less debt’ to me. It has made a private college more affordable,” Mobley says, “I see it as a great opportunity that anyone who meets the criteria should apply for...it’s free money for school.”

*Percentage based on Indiana Department of Education statistics.