

# New England Dollars for SCHOLARS®

A Division of Scholarship America®



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## From Scholarship America

**Honors for Scholarship America Founder Irving Fradkin.** Dr. Fradkin was honored by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth at its annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast on Friday, February 6th. He was one of two recipients of the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award that recognizes two individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions toward realizing Dr.

King's dream of equality, social justice, and peace. Dr. Fradkin was pleased to accept this award saying, "I began this organization with the belief that we are all God's children; that regardless of race, religion or color, every child has the right to a college education." Congratulations Dr. Fradkin.

**National Newsletter: In Touch.** Watch for the e-newsletter *In Touch with Dollars*

*for Scholars.* It lets chapters know what's going at the national and regional offices, provides updated materials, and spotlights exceptional chapters, volunteers and activities. If you'd like to sign up to receive *In Touch*, send your name, email address, and chapter affiliation to [chapters@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:chapters@scholarshipamerica.org). Each issue of *In Touch with Dollars for Scholars* is also available on the Chapter Portal.

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## 2008 Year-End Reports

The regional office began receiving chapter Year-End Reports and Fees before January had even ended. CSF of Stafford Springs (CT) was the first chapter to complete all their reporting; we date-stamped their paperwork on 1/21/09!

Thanks to all of you who got your material to us on time — or very close to it! We appreciate you!

The *Academic Support Activity Report* captures the work our chapters do in addition to fundraising and awarding

scholarships.

The *Financial Report* ensures a complete and accurate group 990. It also allows us to gather critical — and very impressive — data about the impact of our Dollars for Scholars network in their communities.

## Online Chapter Survey

Thanks to our chapter presidents who completed the online chapter survey earlier this month. We value your input!

## **Regional Board**

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*Ruggiero Insurance and  
Financial Services, LLC*

**Susan Weinberger**  
*Mentor Consultant Group*

### **Staff**

**David Duncan**  
*dduncan@scholarshipamerica.org*

**Lynne Zervas**  
*lzervas@scholarshipamerica.org*

51 Main Street, Suite 2  
Stoneham, MA 02180  
800-335-4360 (toll free)  
781-481-9000/781-481-9105 (fax)  
<http://ne.dollarsforscholars.org>

## **Dear Friends,**

The current environment in financial aid has made our work in Dollars for Scholars and Scholarship America more important than ever before. Families are struggling to pay for higher education, and students are making decisions on where, and whether, to continue onto postsecondary education based solely on cost.

There is some good news in this otherwise bleak situation. We have the Collegiate Partners Program. No other scholarship organization has a program like this. These institutional partners are committed to supporting Dollars for Scholars' private sector scholarships. Chapters know ahead of time exactly what will happen when their scholarships arrive on campus.

Our Collegiate Partners are increasingly concerned about retaining and graduating students with *marketable* credentials. What good is a year of college, for example, if the student drops out with little or nothing to show for it? What I am suggesting is that while it is great to give a scholarship for that first year, it is better, and perhaps more critical, to encourage those students to reapply for scholarships in subsequent years until they complete their postsecondary program.

All the higher education literature reinforces that the most common reason students dropout of higher education is financial. The most difficult time for students is between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a postsecondary education. Since our Matching Partners will match chapter awards regardless of the year of enrollment, our chapters have a simple tool to help local students complete a postsecondary program. If more of our chapters offer scholarship to returning college students, even for just the second year, I am convinced that your scholarships will make an even greater difference. This added incentive to continue would then be reinforced by the support of our Matching Partners. What we don't want is a chapter recipient to leave after only one year. They will likely have loan debt from that one year and no credentials to show for it. This makes finding a decent job a real struggle, made worse by the current economic climate.

For the first 50 years of Dollars for Scholars, the focus has been all about raising the "Dollars". Chapters were successful and many collected large donations. We have done a pretty good job of helping students get started in a postsecondary program. In the next 50 years, our focus will be on the "Scholars". We will help them get through to graduation so that they can get jobs that will enable them give back to the chapter that once gave to them.

David W. Duncan, Executive Director

## **New Volunteer Resource Materials**

To support Scholarship America's focus on Dollars for Scholars, look for new, volunteer-specific resources on the Chapter Portal. You'll find a Volunteer Management Guide to help with recruiting, retaining, and recognizing volunteers including "best practices" in these areas.

## From the National Dollars for Scholars Operations Team

### Scholarship Applications.

An updated Student Application is now on the Chapter Portal. It reflects the changes to the SAT and ACT. Likewise, the Award segment in the *Chapter Guidebook* has also been updated. Look for that on the Chapter Portal as well.

**Upcoming Resources.** Many of our chapters have asked about sample language for a Conflict of Interest Policy, a Whistleblower Policy, and

### Document Retention and Destruction Policy.

Guidelines for document retention and destruction can be found in the *Chapter Guidebook* on the Chapter Portal, specifically in Section 1, page 19. In addition, the National Dollars for Scholars Operations Team is working on language for both a conflict of interest policy and a whistleblower policy. Once approved, they will be available on the Chapter Portal.

## The Economy and Postsecondary Plans

Post secondary institutions have seen a change in student trends between the winters of 2007 and 2009:

- Less willingness to travel far from home
- Less willingness to take on student loan debt
- Applications to more colleges to leverage financial aid
- Trading down from four-year private to public institutions and from four-year public institutions to community colleges

Institutions themselves are also facing new issues:

- Enrollment boom at community colleges is negatively affected by significant state budget cuts, limiting their ability to accommodate all applicants
- Increase in student requests for new arrangements to pay school bills

Visit New  
England Dollars  
for Scholars new  
regional website.  
Our site has been  
designed in a  
format similar to  
the Scholarship  
America web site.

Go to  
[ne.dollarsforscholars.org](http://ne.dollarsforscholars.org)  
to check it out.

## 2009 Chapter Calendar

March 16	2009 Community Volunteer Service Awards (CVSA) Program Closes
April 1	2009 Collegiate Partners Directory mailed to Chapter Presidents
April 15	Golden Tassel Award Nominations Open
June 1	2009 – 2010 Chapter Recipient Lists Distributed to Chapter Treasurers
July 1	Golden Tassel Award Nominations Due
October 1	2009 – 2010 Chapter Recipient Lists Due
November 7	12th Annual Chapter Volunteer Workshop College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA
December 30	Community Volunteer Service Award Program Opens
December 31	Chapter 2009 Fiscal Year Ends

**Chapter  
Drawing  
Winners of  
the four \$500  
prizes will be  
announced in  
April 2009.**

## Collegiate Partners Corner

2009 Collegiate Partners Directory — Electronic versions of the 2009 Collegiate Partners Directory are on the Chapter Portal. Chapter presidents will receive a paper copy; your high schools will receive a postcard with instructions to find the Directory at the Scholarship America web site.

Matching Collegiate Partners — Be sure to complete the Matching Award Request Form (found at the back of the Directory and on the Chapter Portal) and forward each completed form to the contact identified in the Directory. Don't delay with this; many matches are first come-first served.

University of Maine at Orono — With very effective “behind the scenes” influence of several well-placed Maine chapter volunteers, the University of Maine Orono has decided to stay in the Collegiate Partners Program. We are delighted that they have remained a Partner and continue to support of the work our chapters are doing.

Newest Collegiate Partner — We are pleased to report that **Great Bay Community College** in Stratham and Portsmouth, NH has joined the Collegiate Partners Program. Welcome!

**Help  
New England  
Dollars for  
Scholars save  
money! Ask for  
your  
newsletter by  
email in PDF  
format.  
Just send  
Lynne Zervas  
your email  
address.  
Each paper copy  
costs .83 cents to  
prepare and  
mail.**

## **Lynne's Lines**

As the going gets tough, the tough get going. This homily has never been truer than today.

All of you have spent this first quarter of the new fiscal year worrying about raising funds, worrying about reduced awards, worrying about your students. But you didn't just wring your hands.

You studied your options. You expanded your fundraising events. You continued setting goals. You held steady and

looked ahead.

After all, your constituents still have dreams of postsecondary education. And that education is more critical now than ever before. A recent Nellie Mae Education Foundation report revealed that the indicator of the skills employers want to see is a post-secondary credential of some kind. At minimum, it should be a two-year credential or its equivalent in order to be meaningful in today's economy. A creden-

tial has far greater economic value, particularly in a technical field and for lower-income students, than taking college courses without a degree.

Your mission couldn't be any more important to your students. And, today, it couldn't be any more difficult to achieve. Despite the challenges, you remain committed to your goals. We salute you all!

Lynne Zervas

Director of Chapter Support Services

## **Dollars for Scholars and Facebook**

You can now stay in touch with Scholarship America and Dollars for Scholars on Facebook! Facebook is the world's most popular social networking site, allowing people to get and stay in touch with like-minded friends. Starting a chapter Facebook page is a free, easy way to stay in contact with current and former recipients and board members.

The main Dollars for Scholars Facebook page, which you can find by searching "Dollars for Scholars," is operated and administered by staff at Scholarship America's headquarters. They are responsible for posting content and approving content posted by

users. We invite you to check it out – the only way a chapter, a volunteer or a recipient can be part of Facebook is to initiate the contact themselves.

You and your chapter's recipients can also join the Dollars for Scholars Alumni and Friends Group. It is there that users will find other chapters that have established groups; by joining, you can also start discussions, post notes, ask questions of other chapters, post chapter photos and videos, and see what others are doing. It's a great way to stay in touch. Find the helpful guide at the Chapter Portal and get started.

## Volunteer Outreach

**National Volunteer Week, April 19 – 25.** Could your chapter accomplish everything it does in a year without volunteers? Use this opportunity to thank your volunteers for their work on behalf of your chapter and students in your community. Write letters to the Editors of your local news media. Send e-cards or notes to your board members. Bring light refreshments to your April board meeting as a simple thank you. Demonstrate that you don't take your volunteers for granted.

**Chapter Retreat.** Every successful organization looks ahead to avoid a constant state of reaction. One way to pause effectively is to schedule a 1-day chapter retreat. Use a professional facilitator. If possible, hold the retreat in a neutral location that is easy to reach. Work with the facilitator to arrange coordinated discussions on your chapter's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This is called a SWOT analysis. Be sure to build in time for fun and socializing.

**Retaining New Board Members.** Are your new volunteers fading away after just a few months? One way to help avoid this is by ensuring an appropriate and effective orientation of prospective volunteers. Give them a packet of chapter history, activities, finances, calendar, committees, etc. before they are elected to the chapter board. The *Chapter Guidebook* has a sample Board Member Agreement that can set everyone's expectations right from the beginning. Clear expectations on all sides can help avoid frustration.

Contact the regional office with your helpful hints and success stories. We would love to feature them.

## Fundraising Tips

### How To Write A Great Thank You Note.

This is the time of year many chapters conduct their fundraising events. In recognition of that, here are several useful hints:

- Real letter instead of printed card
- Personally addressed
- Personal salutation
- Personal signature preferably of a chapter official
- Refers to how gift will be used
- Provides chapter contact information and invitation to do so
- Notes giving history, if any
- Well written without errors
- Positive tone reflecting excitement, gratitude
- Opening sentence grabs attention
- Speaks directly to donor
- Concise
- Prompt
- Handwritten when appropriate
- Does not ask for another gift
- Does not ask for donor to take any action
- Is not fretful or anxious
- Does not continue to sell the chapter

## Chapter Highlight: Wakefield Adult Mentoring, a program of CSF of Wakefield, Inc.

In November 2001, at the chapter's Annual Meeting, former President and long-time volunteer Bob Eldridge received approval from the board to launch a school-based mentoring program called Wakefield Adult Mentoring (WAM). Ten months later, in September of 2002, the first pairings of 20 mentors and middle school students (grades 5 – 8) met over cider and donut holes in the middle school library. By the start of the current academic year, 45 mentors and students from grades 2 through 12 were meeting regularly, and last month (February 2009) that number had ballooned to 55 pairs. Five young men and women who began in the program in middle school will graduate from high school in 2009. With the steady support of their mentors, many of them are looking ahead to higher education. Those mentees who have been part of WAM for at least three years and who go on to a postsecondary program will receive a \$500 scholarship. These scholarships come from individual donations to the program specifically for this purpose.

Years earlier Bob heard a presentation by a Washington chapter volunteer at a national Dollars for Scholars conference about his chapter's mentoring program, and Bob knew immediately that he'd bring such a program to Wakefield. Upon retirement, he began the groundwork, meeting with the Superintendent of Schools and addressing the School Committee to build support, establish guidelines, and set a structure for a mentoring program. He turned to his chapter for two key elements of support – community credibility to legitimize the fledgling program and financial support to underwrite mentor training and materials. Once the approvals were in place and his own chapter was on board, Bob found and trained mentors. School personnel identified youngsters who would benefit from the program. As WAM approaches its seventh anniversary, it is an unequivocal success.

Bob's conviction that Wakefield has youngsters who need the consistent support of adult mentors required significant perseverance on his part. Working with school administrators, who in turn worked with the parents of prospective "mentees", he started slowly. The first two academic years focused on middle school students. Soon those students were moving on to the high school, and that transition required adjustments in order to continue successful mentoring relationships in the new environment. After a couple of years, Bob cautiously introduced WAM to the elementary schools. Moving to the lower grades required different adjustments. Logistical issues not found at the middle and high schools cropped up – where to meet in crowded schools with virtually no unused space; when to meet when each day is so tightly scheduled. Somehow, WAM prevailed.

Bob markets WAM with business cards and brochures. Every year all School Department staff receive a letter about the program. Every January, National Mentoring Month, one mentor is featured in the local newspaper and a local hotel sponsors a brunch for the mentors. Every spring WAM has an annual meeting for mentors. Every June the local Rotary Club sponsors a cookout for mentors and mentees. Today, the need continues for mentors who will give one hour a week of their time.

Most importantly WAM has fostered a culture of success. Mentors are reaching out to children in need of a steady, faithful friend and are forging lifelong friendships.

For more information on Wakefield Adult Mentoring, contact the regional office. Bob would love to talk to you and share his story in your community.



51 Main Street, Suite 2  
Stoneham, MA 02180

**Because College Doesn't Happen By Chance®**

**Visit our web site:**  
<http://ne.dollarsforscholars.org>

**Get Ready. Get In. Get Through. Give Back.**

These four short phrases form the core strategy of Dollars for Scholars. Scholarship America is focusing on more than just helping students “get in” to higher education with one award when they are high school seniors. In coming newsletters, we will feature chapters that are helping students “get ready” for postsecondary education (see the Chapter Highlight on page 7). Or chapters that are providing scholarships to returning college students to help ensure they “get through”. And even chapters that are effectively reaching out to former recipients to “give back”. Every chapter is helping students “get in”, but many chapters are doing much more than that!