

Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of Marblehead, Inc.

A Chapter of Dollars for Scholars®



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Scholarship Foundation: Phonathon success essential in tough economy

By Nancy Marrs / Special to the Reporter
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Marblehead - In these tough economic times and with tuition bills rising, Marblehead families are feeling the pressure of financing their children's college education. That's why the success of the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation's Annual Phonathon is so important.

The Phonathon will take place this Sunday, March 22 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Marblehead High School Library. It is the organization's only fundraising event, and it plays a vital role in raising the necessary capital to fund annual awards for high school seniors, college students and continuing-education students.

CSFM, a chapter of Dollars for Scholars and a program of Scholarship America, was founded in 1987 by a group of citizens and educators who recognized the increasing demand for a college education and its associated high costs. They were committed to raising scholarship funds in order to help Marblehead students pursue their educational goals.



Members of the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors prepare for their upcoming annual Phonathon on March 22. From left, front row, are Nancy Marrs, David Vigneron and Susie Kane; back row, Helaine Hazlett and CSFM President Ed Harvey.

"We're a grassroots organization, and our Phonathon is a very impressive endeavor," said new CSFM President Ed Harvey. "For 22 years, this fundraiser has been carried by our dedicated board members and by volunteers from the community. Without their time and hard work, the Phonathon would not be possible."

Making thousands of phone calls in one day is a rather daunting task, but this is what the organization hopes to achieve on Sunday. Over the course of the day, more than 100 volunteers will spend two-hour shifts folding pledge letters and stuffing envelopes or soliciting donations by phone.

Volunteers include CSFM board members, selectmen and School Committee members, parents of current or former CSFM scholarship recipients and MHS students.

Along with the flurry of activity that happens throughout the day, there is a great sense of community spirit and fun, too.

"The Phonathon always feels like a community get-together," said Alex Kulevich, CSFM vice president and former high school athletic director.

It is not too late to get involved, and anyone who is interested in helping out is invited to contact the Phonathon volunteer coordinators by e-mailing csfmvolunteers@yahoo.com.

This year, the organization is likely to see an increase in scholarship applications due to the economy, which is why the foundation's board of directors hopes that Marbleheaders will show their customary generosity when they receive a solicitation phone call or follow-up letter. Donations both large and small are central to the mission of the organization and are truly appreciated.

"I believe in the value of a college education, as does our board," said Harvey. "The advantages of receiving a college education are profound and can have a great impact on the course of a young person's life."

The Citizens' Scholarship Foundation hopes that a successful 2009 Phonathon will enable many Marblehead students to realize their educational goals.

Harvey said, "We try to increase the accessibility of a college education by easing the financial burden (on the students and families of Marblehead)."

For those who are not contacted during the March 22 Phonathon but wish to make a contribution, tax-deductible donations may be sent to: Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of Marblehead, P.O. Box 4, Marblehead, MA 01945. For more information about the organization, visit csfmarblehead.org.

Nancy Marrs is a member of the CSFM Board of Directors.