



# Scholarships 101

Tim Durling, Career Specialist, WCHS

November 17, 2015 - 6pm - WCHS Cafeteria

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# **What are scholarships?**

Scholarships are free monies awarded to students on the basis of academics, community service, leadership, financial need, etc.

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# When do I start preparing for scholarships?

9<sup>th</sup> grade! That's when a student's GPA begins to count toward success in the pursuit of scholarships. A student should maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

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# **When do I start doing community service?**

9<sup>th</sup> grade is also when we start recording community service hours for scholarships. Many scholarship committees want to award money to dedicated students who give of themselves to serve others.

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# What is community service?

Community service is a time investment in the community through various activities as a volunteer. This can include churches, hospitals, libraries, schools, clinics, nursing homes, sports associations, animal shelters, Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, Big Brothers Big Sisters, etc.

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# How is community service recorded?

Use the WCHS community service form. Get copies from Mr Durling, Student Services, or our school website. One form should be completed per organization worked for and turned in at least once a semester. Students should keep a copy.

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# **What do scholarship committees look for in community service?**

- The student's dedication to service
  - A positive change in the student
  - The difference that it made for others
  - They're not necessarily looking for a long list of different activities.
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# **How can a student earn college credit while still in high school, regardless of financial need?**

A couple of ways...

- Dual Enrollment
  - Advanced Placement
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# **What is Dual Enrollment?**

Students can take college level courses at PHSC (or on the WCHS campus with participating teachers qualified to teach college level courses) that will count for both high school AND college credit.

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# What is Advanced Placement?

Advanced Placement is a nationally standardized program of college-level courses and exams for high school students. After taking an AP course, students must receive a qualifying score on an AP exam to receive college credit consideration.

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# **What tests do college-bound students need to take?**

Every student going to college should take ACT and SAT by the end of 11th grade. A high score can help with scholarships (as well as acceptance into desired colleges). Students can retake these exams during senior year as well to improve scores.

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# **What do I need to do in high school beyond academics?**

Beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students should consider leadership opportunities and join clubs, sports, band, student council, honor societies, etc.

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# **Should a student have a job while in high school?**

Work experience tends to look good to scholarship committees. But make sure you create balance! Too much work can cause grades to suffer. Also, remember that student income is combined with parent income to determine eligibility for financial aid.

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# **Will I automatically get scholarships if I've done all the “right” things?**

No! GPA, ACT/SAT scores, community service, leadership, employment, and extracurricular activities create a *foundation* that increases the *probability* of receiving scholarships.

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# **Many scholarships require an essay.**

Essays are not as hard and scary as they sound! Let's break one down into 3 sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. The body consists of up to 4 parts: family, obstacles, community service, and life interest. Each part should consist of 3 sentences max.

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# Essay Introduction

- Never start with “Hello, my name is...”
  - Always catch the reader’s attention and interest.
  - Essay must be unique and stand out.
  - It can ask a question, describe an engaging scene, state a fact, be a quote that been emphasized by a friend or relative, or be related to a life obstacle.
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# Essay Body – Family

- Describe your family, being very specific: ethnic background, country origins, gender, number of siblings, parents educational backgrounds/occupations

- Include special circumstances like: single family home, illness, death, disability of a family member

(Note: Limit essay body sections to 3 sentences)

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# Essay Body – Obstacle

- What has been your greatest obstacle?
  - What character-building lessons have you learned, are being learned, do you need to learn from your obstacle?
  - How has this obstacle made you a better, more determined person?
  - How will this obstacle help you to become successful in the future?
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# Essay Body – Community Svc

- What was your commitment and how did you have a leadership role?
  - How did you personally make a difference?
  - Did you find your purpose in life through your community activities?
  - If possible, community service should align with life interest.
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# Essay Body – Life Interest

- What is your life purpose, your dream, your career goal?
  - How and where will you prepare for your life interest, ministry, and/or vocation?
  - How can you serve and make a difference in the lives of others through your life interest?
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# Essay Conclusion

- Why do you personally need a scholarship?
  - Describe in detail any special circumstances.
  - The last sentence should contain a clincher, a strong statement showing your personal determination and strength.
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# **A winning Scholarship Essay is your Story!**

- Include adjectives that describe color, details, the five senses.
  - Be personal, tell of actual experiences.
  - Be well written and free from grammatical and spelling errors.
  - The final draft should be only one typed double-spaced page.
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# Recommendation Letters

- Most scholarships require recommendation letters.
  - Three types may be needed, depending on the scholarship: teacher, school counselor, and community leader.
  - No recommendation letters should be from a relative or friend.
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# **When should a student request Recommendation Letters?**

- Request letters at least 2 to 3 weeks before they are needed.
  - Ask for letters early in the school year! Later in the year, teachers and counselors get very very busy.
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# Where can students find scholarships?

There are three primary sources:

1. Internet search sites. Links to several are on our school web site.
  2. College financial aid offices.
  3. WCHS Career Specialist. Watch bulletin boards and our web site for local scholarships.
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# Scholarship Search Sites

BigFuture

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

COLLEGEdata

[collegedata.com](http://collegedata.com)

FastWeb

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

FinAid

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

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# More Search Sites

Finding Money For College

[findingmoneyforcollege.com](http://findingmoneyforcollege.com)

Scholarship Monkey

[www.scholarshipmonkey.com](http://www.scholarshipmonkey.com)

Scholarships 4 Students

[scholarships4students.com](http://scholarships4students.com)

Scholarships.com

[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

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# College Financial Aid Offices

- Financial Aid Offices are happy to talk to you as soon as you are accepted.
  - You may get some college scholarships automatically because of the data you provided on the application
  - You may have an opportunity to apply for other college scholarships
  - Ask, ask, ask!
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# WCHS Career Specialist

Local scholarships will be available through your career specialist.

Examples:

- Chamber of Commerce scholarship
  - Rotary Club scholarship
  - Withlacoochee Electric scholarship
  - Wiregrass Foundation scholarship
  - Pasco Ed Foundation scholarship
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# Should we look out for scholarship scams?

Yes! The Federal Trade Commission offers six warning signs to help detect a scholarship scam:

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# Scholarship Scams

1. “This scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”
  2. “The scholarship service will do all the work.”
  3. “The scholarship service will cost some money.”
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# Scholarship Scams

4. “You can’t get this information anywhere else.”

5. “You are the finalist in a contest you never entered.”

6. “The scholarship service needs a credit card or checking acct number.”

See: [www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams](http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams)

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# What is the key to receiving a scholarship?

- Apply, apply, apply!
  - The more a student applies, the greater the chances of receiving a scholarship.
  - Some students complete 30-40 scholarship applications!
  - You must be motivated, organized, and persistent!
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# **Is all scholarship money available actually awarded to students?**

No! Resources tell us that millions of dollars worth of scholarships go unclaimed every year.

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# What about federal and state money?

- Student's family will complete the FAFSA and Bright Futures applications in January of the senior year.
  - Federal award can include free grant money based on income.
  - Bright Futures can provide scholarship money based on merit.
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# Bright Futures Scholarship

Key qualifiers:

- 2 years of the same foreign language
- Minimum GPA
- Minimum community service hours
- Minimum ACT or SAT score

Students must apply and meet the qualifications to get the scholarship.

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# **More on FAFSA and Bright Futures**

- Come to our Financial Aid Night right here in the cafeteria on December 15th to learn more!
  - We'll have a representative here from the Florida Department of Education to speak and to answer questions.
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# Scholarships 101

*Thank you for coming!!!*

*And have a great evening!!!*

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