

DEADLINES APPROACHING - COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR EQUESTRIANS

Special to the Oakland Press
By Sharon Greene

Higher education just keeps getting higher. The cost for a college education continues to climb every year, despite the economic downturn. It has become beyond the scope of many to afford to pay for the tuition compounded by the cost of living in a dorm on campus or commuting any distance. One way for young equestrians graduating from high school or that are already in college can help to fund their education or offset expenses is to apply for scholarships. Searching for horse-related scholarship information isn't always easy.

For the last three years the Highland Equestrian Conservancy has offered a \$500 scholarship to students involved in equestrian sports, studying land conservation, natural resource preservation or participated in "green" alternative energy programs. "This year we have decided to give two scholarships worth \$250 each to two graduating high school seniors," said Amanda Poxon, Secretary for the Conservancy. "Last year, the biggest problem was the fact that students and parents did not follow the directions as outlined in the application – they did not complete the application accurately or did not provide a transcript or letter of recommendation that was required." The Conservancy did not award the scholarship to a graduate in 2009. The 2010 scholarship is available to both public and private school students that are residents of Commerce, Highland, Holly, Hartland, Milford, White Lake and Rose Townships.

The Conservancy touts their funding as a perfect fit for science club students, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H and Equestrian Team members who have volunteered on a project at school or in their community by assisting local organizations; clearing trails, pulling invasive species, being involved in an alternative energy project such as windmill or solar or helping with a handicapped riding program, etc. The application deadline is 3:00 PM, March 19, 2010.

The Michigan Horse Council provides 10 scholarships annually to students supporting the equine industry. Their scholarship criteria includes scholastic achievement, duration, involvement and volunteerism in horse organizations plus contributions to the horse industry.

According to Marilyn Graff of the Michigan Horse Council, "We award scholarships to the tune of \$10,500 annually." The awards include 3 scholarships of \$1000 to students who are members of their organization (new memberships are available) -- 2 scholarships in the amount of \$500 for those that have participated in 4H Horse Shows – 1 scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 for a student enrolled in the Horse Management program at MSU – 1 scholarship for \$2,000 for a student pursuing a Bachelor's degree with an emphasis on equine – 1 scholarship for \$2,000 for a student pursuing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree with intent to practice in Michigan. A downloadable scholarship application package is available for review. Deadlines vary.

Graduating high school equestrian team members have options including the Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association Scholarships. There is one \$500 scholarship

available this year. Requirements include team participation for 4 years, a letter of recommendation from the coach and an essay. Deadline is December 31, 2009.

Equestrian Team students in the Huron Valley School district (Commerce, Highland, Milford, White Lake) are available to apply for the Huron Valley Equestrian Committee Scholarships. The 2 scholarships of \$250 each are granted to a graduating high school student that has participated with either Milford or Lakeland High School's equestrian teams. Deadline is 3:00 PM, March 19, 2010.

Don't be intimidated by the task of researching funding. With the internet search engines, it's worth investigating youth horse programs with horse breed organizations such as the Michigan Arabian Association, Michigan Justin Morgan Horse Association, Buckskin Horse Association of Michigan and the Michigan Quarter Horse Association for scholarships. The Michigan Department of Agriculture – Livestock Fund and Michigan Hunter Jumper Association also have scholarships available. The applications and information are not necessarily posted on their websites, but are generally available to members who have participated in these organizations with horses of specific breed registry or show involvement. Do a little digging, contact regional representatives directly to inquire and the rewards could be great. Deadlines are approaching quickly.

"Students should not limit themselves to applying for just large scholarships," advised Poxon, "as the small ones add up and can help to cover the cost of books and other incidentals. It's worth their while to apply, but they must follow the directions precisely for each scholarship application to be considered."

FYI – For scholarship information visit:

Highland Equestrian Conservancy info -- www.HighlandEquestrianConservancy.org -- visit the counseling offices at Lakeland High School in White Lake Township or Milford High School in Highland Township or call 248.887.3970

Michigan Horse Council info -- www.MichiganHorseCouncil.com

Michigan State University -- Horse Management and Bachelor's Degree scholarships, contact MSU Dept. of Animal Science at 517.355.838.

Michigan State University -- College of Veterinary Medicine scholarship, contact 517.355.7624.

Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association info -- www.MIHA.org

Huron Valley Equestrian Committee info -- for equestrian team students in Milford, Highland, White Lake and Commerce Townships, visit the counseling offices at Lakeland High School in White Lake Township or Milford High School in Highland Township or call 248.684.8000.

Send horse information, events or comments to sharonlgreene@hotmail.com