

## **Frosh incentive: Scholarship plan set for class of 2013**

*The Gleaner*, by Victoria Grabner

Freshmen entering Henderson County High School for the start of classes on Wednesday may not be thinking of much more than how to get through the first day.

But there are others in the area that are thinking way beyond that — which is why a new scholarship program has been put in place for members of the future graduating class of 2013 who choose to attend four semesters of Henderson Community College.

“It takes all of us to improve education and we’re going to be working as a team,” said Joan Hoffman, who is chairing one of the focus groups that came out of last fall’s Rally 4 Educational Excellence.

The idea is to use donated funds from community businesses and residents to help that segment of the student population that typically falls in between full scholarships and full financial aid packages.

To be eligible, students in the class of 2013 must have at least a 2.5 grade point average and 96 percent attendance every semester at County High to receive money from the Colonels 2 College program.

Those figures are not cumulative, Hoffman said, adding that “if they don’t make a 2.5 grade point average at the end of their freshmen year, then they are not eligible.”

Also, this year’s freshmen have to complete high school in eight semesters. However, an appeals committee will be established so that if a student has a serious illness or some other circumstance that affects when he or she graduates, they can be heard.

That committee will be comprised of school officials and community members, Hoffman said. As for how much each qualifying student would receive, the plan is to give each student up to \$1,000 per semester for four semesters. The long-term goal is to raise that amount per student to \$1,500 per semester.

The program at this point is for students who plan to attend Henderson Community College because organizers want students to remain local.

“This came out of an economic development issue,” Hoffman said. “We feel for Henderson and Henderson County to benefit, we need to keep those kids local, and hopefully they will be the valued employees that our businesses need.”

Colonels 2 College has the full support of Northwest Kentucky Forward. According to Hoffman, Madisonville and Hopkinsville have similar programs that have shown success.

“It has proven to be a valuable economic development tool for these communities,” she added in an e-mail to *The Gleaner*.

Hoffman said that on Thursday, Aug. 6, parents and freshmen will be given more information about the program during a free spaghetti and Know Your School Night that begins at 5:30 p.m. in the cafeteria.

Once at HCC, by the way, students who qualify for the Colonels 2 College scholarships will need to meet the same academic requirements as others who receive financial aid.

Ralph Ashworth, a parent of an incoming freshman at County High, learned about the program just recently.

While he said it's too early for his daughter, Melanie, to know what her career plans are, he said the program seems like it would be helpful.

"I don't have a real feel for the costs of tuition at the community college right now, but some colleges are quite expensive," Ashworth said. "Every bit helps when you are in college."

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The Henderson Community College Foundation will be the fiscal agent for the money raised. Gifts from the community will go into an account that will only be used for the scholarships.

Those gifts will be tax deductible.

Contributions may be sent to 2660 S. Green St., Henderson, KY, 42420.