

Promise Scholars seeks to reward hardworking students

Suzanne Sproul, Staff Writer

Ontario-Montclair Schools Foundation supporters see a lot of promise in their students and they want to reward that hard work.

In fact, the newly created Ontario-Montclair Schools Foundation recently hosted its first Promise Scholars Donor Recognition Event. It served as a kickoff of fundraising efforts to provide special scholarships to all OMSD students who graduate from a Chaffey Joint Union High School District school before moving on to a partner college.

Proceeds also help the fifth-grade Promise Scholars community college tours and other programs.

To date, more than \$125,000 has been raised since June.

The Promise Scholars initiative is a partnership bringing together educational centers to help young people achieve.

Partners include OMSD, CJHSD, Chaffey College, California State University San Bernardino and the Alliance for Education along with the cities of Ontario, Montclair as well as The Community Foundation and the Inland Empire United Way.

"All OMSD students deserve to be fully prepared in the 21st century economy and a post-secondary education is crucial to our students' futures," said Dr. James Q. Hammond, OMSD superintendent, in a prepared statement.

And that's the idea behind the program - preparing local students for success. Doing that means attending college is essential as well as experiencing technical training programs.

One of the newest business partners to come aboard is Cardenas Markets.

Company public affairs director Marco Robles said Promise Scholars not only helps students and families but also adds to the Inland Valley's economy.

Another supporter is Soroptimist International Montclair/Inland Valley. The service nonprofit focuses on improving the lives of girls and women. It now has expanded that support local students.

Yet another partner is Southern California Gas Co. Company public affairs manager Robert Cruz who said education is a life-changing experience and the Gas Company is looking forward to helping make dreams come true.

Leslie Sorensen is an ex-officio member of the Promise Scholars Foundation board of directors. She and Karla Wells, assistant superintendent of learning and teaching, are working together to spread the word about the program throughout the community.

Sorensen said she is grateful for the dedicated supporters they have in place, but volunteers are needed to present college and career pathways to OMSD sixth-graders.

These mentors would show the students the tremendous possibilities that await them while helping them make the connection between education and successful careers.

Business partners also are needed for sponsorships so the program can provide scholarships and tours of college campuses.

OMSD graduates in the Class of 2016 will be the first group of students participating in the new Promise Scholars college access program. Promise Scholars is a comprehensive college program that allows OMSD students who complete preparatory requirements access and admission to colleges, including Chaffey College, Cal State San Bernardino and Cal State Bakersfield.

Promise Scholars was inspired by the popular and effective Online to College program launched by the city of Montclair and Chaffey College through the Montclair Community Collaborative.

For more information, call 909-418-6331.

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