



Voyager



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Rockford Promise paves the way for RPS graduates

Milica Samoukovic
Reporter

In 2006, Dr. John McHugh, a retired physician and the instigator of Crusader Community Health, read in his morning paper about Kalamazoo Promise, a program that allowed children who graduated from Kalamazoo public schools to receive scholarships. He knew he wanted to give a similar opportunity to RPS 205 students, but he also knew he could not do it alone.

McHugh suggested a proposition to Alan Ginsberg, Dan Williams, Jan Jones, and Elaine Breck, community leaders who eventually became board members of what is now Rockford Promise.

Another board member is Keith Kruchten, who earned his Master degree in Student Development and College Administration from the University of Mississippi, and now serves as Scholarship Selection Committee Chairperson.

"When I moved back to Rockford, I took a step back to study what I could do to have the biggest impact on my community," said Kruchten. "I realized that there is a great equalizer amongst all people and that is education. The more educated a person is, the more likely they will lead a happy, healthy life and be a productive member of society, and that is when I came across Rockford Promise and joined the board."

Unfortunately, one of the main reasons most high school graduates are not able to go to college is because they simply cannot afford it due to their financial situation. The goal of the program is to provide these students with the opportunity of a post-secondary education. The program offers full tuition scholarships to qualifying students. However, the program does not simply give students money

and let them loose; it provides unconditional support for students, in hopes that they either receive a degree or finish the program.

"I want to sign up for Rockford Promise because I won't be able to afford tuition otherwise, especially with things like living on campus," said Janelly Lizardi, senior. "So hopefully, by applying to Rockford Promise, I can get some sort of help financially. I hope to receive funds to at least start my first semester of college next year."

It's a competitive road to receiving a scholarship. Students must be planning on attending

the program include the Rockford Urological Associates, the Swedish American Medical Group, The Wanda McNeil Scholar, the Clark Legacy Foundation, and The Martha Daniels Unitarian Universalist Church Scholar. This year, two of the listed scholarships were received by Dayana Rosales (Swedish America), and Magdaleno Mendoza (Rockford Urology). As well as those two, new programs were created as well; The Dr. Wameer Mardini Family Scholarship was received by Uwez Msambya, and the St. Anthony Medical Center scholarship, was received by Alexis Jefferson.

"I received a full ride scholarship from Rockford Urological Associates, and am going to Rockford University to study nursing, and may possibly go to school to become a doctor afterward,"

Magdaleno Mendoza.

Counselors recommend the program to students they believe might benefit from it most.

"I first found out about Rockford Promise from my counselor at Jefferson and I saw posters of it around East while I was there," said Mendoza. "My counselor really motivated me to apply. She sat me down and she walked me through the whole process."

Students are determined to meet the requirements necessary to be able to be chosen for the opportunity over everyone else.

"I was the first and only African to receive a full-ride scholarship, and when I first came to the United States five years ago, I didn't speak English, and I feel like it was more of a struggle for me than for kids who were native to the land and language," said Erica Bibalou, sophomore at Rock Valley College.

Note: facts for this story were compiled from the Rockford Promise website, www.rockford-promise.org. All interviews and quotes are original.



2017 Rockford Promise Scholars along side the founders. / PHOTO Rockford Promise Website

either Rock Valley College or Rockford University; complete an application for FAFSA; have an unweighted GPA of at least 3.0, an ACT score of at least 22 or SAT score of 1100-1200; be eligible for Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP); be eligible for the Federal Penn Grant; and have already applied to the college of their choice.

"When we have to made the very difficult choices as to which of the many highly deserving applicants is going to receive the scholarship, we give preference to those who NEED it most, and for that reason, students who live in the Midtown and Ellis Height's neighborhoods and surrounding areas are given preference," explained Kruchten. "About half of our recipients lived within the designated neighborhoods for the last year."

Funding is received only through private donations and a single event hosted every year called "Raise the Roof," which raised almost \$45,000 of revenue for the organization. Recent sponsors that have contributed to

STUDENTS BUILD UP THE COMMUNITY

CJ Larson
Editor-In Chief

Special education students at Guilford are giving a helping hand to the construction classes working with Habitat for Humanity. The Vocation class for Students with Disabilities travels to the house site three to four times a week during second and third hour. The class is designed to teach job skills and create an environment where students can have new, important experiences.

"[The students] are learning to follow directions and work with others," said Mel Gilfillan, Special Education Teacher. "They're gaining job specific skills like working with tools, such as shovels and rakes."

While there, students clear the plots of land of sticks and rocks so that the construction team can easily transition into the space. The construction teams have been very thankful because they can go right to work and avoid the tedious task of removing debris from the plots.

"It makes the site much more presentable," said Aaron Johnson, junior, who will be working on the Habitat for Humanity home. "Then we're not tripping over stuff and can easily move equipment."

PUBLICATIONS TAKES ON KEMPA



Newspaper chief editors CJ Larson and Olivia Hagerty show off the All-KEMPA award. PHOTO/ Newspaper Staff

Yearbook editors proudly present their 2nd place KEMPA award. PHOTO/ Newspaper Staff



For many years, Guilford has entered the Kettle Moraine Press Association (KEMPA) competition held at UW Whitewater. This year, *The Voyager* newspaper had the honor of taking home the All-KEMPA award, the highest distinction given. The *Vallhalla* yearbook received a 2nd place award.

In addition to this, many staff members received individual awards:

- Charles Larson--Best of Show for Page One Design
- Lauren Bear--Award of Excellence for Double Truck Design
- Elizabeth Rogers Award of Excellence for her feature story, "Teen Pregnancy"
- Olivia Hagerty--Honorable Mention for Double Truck Design
- Marie Burns--Honorable Mention for Double Truck Design
- Lauren Bear--Honorable Mention for a Feature Story: "Janet Lynn - Guilford's Olympian"
- Xaria Ingram--Honorable Mention for a Feature Story: "Splitting the Midwest"

OPENING DOORS AT GUILFORD

After a long anticipated wait, seniors are finally able to take advantage of their new freedom

Riley DeBoer
Reporter

For several years now, Guilford students have wanted the opportunity to have off-campus lunch. Up until this year, the option has been unavailable. But starting this year, the school has begun to initiate off campus lunch, with some restrictions. The privilege is currently only allotted to seniors who are meeting the following criteria: passing all of their classes, having no behavioral issues, and having a permission slip signed.

Students only have one class period to leave campus, do what they want to do, and get back to school. This limited amount of time has some students thinking that it is not enough.

"I think that they should increase the time that is allowed," said Joshua Winegar, senior. "Fifty minutes isn't enough time to get anything done."



Dane Ahlquist, senior, visits Starbucks during open campus lunch./Hannah Willis PHOTO

After leaving campus, students may do one of a number of things. Some will go out to eat while others will simply go home for a while.

"I have left for open campus twice," said Shpetim Jakupi, senior. "Both times I just went home and took a short nap."

Going off-campus is a bit more complicated than just leaving the building. The process of leaving requires seniors to have to get their ID's scanned by security at the front entrance and be back before the end of their lunch hour. Many students think that this process is tedious and time consuming, with some even wondering if it is even worth leaving.

"I think that we shouldn't have to walk around the school just to get to our cars," said Jakupi. "They should allow us to go out of the back doors as well as the front doors."

Even with its problems, the system has kept things organized. There has been only one tardy due to this so far and it isn't relatively busy, with only about student seven people leaving every hour.

"I think things would be smoother if students have their ID's ready," said Mr. Rashod Martin, security guard.