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Program helps kids explore future

By Ryan Silvola
Jun 14, 2018

BELOIT — A \$25,000 pilot program formed through a partnership between the Hendricks Family Foundation and the Stateline Community Foundation will help Beloit students explore paths for their futures.

Experience Fellowships will be awarded to Beloit students between the ages of 11 and 19 to pursue education/career programs, civic opportunities, volunteer activities, creative endeavors or athletic prospects. The Fellowship targets young people who may not be able to pursue their interests without fellowship support.

The Stateline Community Foundation began accepting applications on June 1 and will administer the fellowships, which will have a maximum award of \$2,500 for each student project. Students will have to partner with a sponsor for their proposed project. The sponsor must be a volunteer or staff member of a local not-for-profit, youth service organization that will manage the fellowship payment on behalf of the student and support the student in managing program requirements and project coordination.



“There are young people in Beloit eager to expand their perspectives and explore their personal passions, yet their family circumstances may not be able to fully support their dream,” said Lisa Furseth, executive director of the Hendricks Family Foundation. “Studies show that stretching outside of comfort zones to try something new and to safely challenge oneself has a tremendous positive impact on adolescent brain development. The Fellowship will allow Beloit youth to access the types of experiences that can make them better students and more engaged members of the community.”

The types of projects that could be sponsored should encourage curiosity and healthy risk-taking, stretch capabilities and build skills, and increase engagement with positive adults.

The fellowship program also will provide opportunities for students to work with adults to understand the importance of planning for a program, structuring ideas, and being responsible for reporting results. Each student must have a sponsor from a local not-for-profit youth service organization who will mentor them during the fellowship program. If students are not already involved with an organization that could serve as a fellowship sponsor, they are encouraged to talk with their school counselors, who may be able to guide them to an organization.

The application process will consist of a one to two-page letter or a short video, explaining the selected activity, why they are interested, and what they think they will gain from the experience.

Parental/guardian permission for participation in the program is required, as is a letter of support from a sponsor. Successful fellowships will be awarded to the sponsor organization for distribution, not to the student or the student’s family.

Applications for fellowships can be submitted via the Stateline Community Foundation website.

Applications may be submitted at any time and students may expect a decision in 30 to 60 days.

For more information, go to the website at <https://statelinecf.org/the-experience-fellowship>.