



EMPOWER

MAINE CHILDREN

MAINE CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND

SPRING 06

ALL SCHOLARSHIP FUND GRADUATES OFF TO COLLEGE!

It's great news! All of our graduates, since our inception five years ago, were accepted to college!

“Low-income students are still much less likely to attend college than their wealthy or middle-class peers.”

With all the challenges they have faced, our students and parents are totally committed to education. Completing high school was just the start for our motivated scholarship students. We are so very proud of them and very happy to have been part of laying the education foundation that encouraged our students to pursue higher education.

One of our graduates actually considered dropping out of her old high school. Once she changed high schools, thanks to the MCSF scholarship, she not only graduated from high school, but is now attending college and plans to become a teacher.

Students from low-income families, like all our students, are often the least likely to go on to college. Just one in five of the students from families in the bottom quartile of income nationally go on to college, according to a recent study.

“Low-income students are still much less likely to attend college than their wealthy or middle-class peers. Two-thirds of the nation's wealthiest 25% of



students enroll in a four-year college within two years of graduating from high school, but just one in five from the bottom 25% do so” according to author Richard Kahlenberg in his new book *America's Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education*.

As we enter our sixth year of empowering families committed to education excellence, we want to thank our generous contributors for making it all possible.

2005 GRADUATE UPDATE

MONIQUE of Bangor attends Nyack College in Nyack, New York, majoring in Interior Design.

GENNIFER of Lincoln attends Colby-Sawyer College in New London, NH, majoring in Business.

ERIN of Bangor attends Bethany Bible College in Sussex, New Brunswick Canada, majoring in Elementary Education.

ANNA of Etna will attend a photo journalism school.



COMMITTED DONORS EMPOWER MAINE KIDS

Profile: Tom Sawyer

“People give to people ... not to causes.”

I became involved in the Maine Children’s Scholarship Fund since my wife and I try to focus our philanthropy on areas of “Youth Intervention.” That is, programs that should help young people grow up to be productive doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians, employers, employees and consumers.

The tipping point for us was the person who requested the contribution. The world is literally full of wonderful, nonprofits, all doing a fine job of helping people. The “difference” is the person doing the “ask” (according to the

professionals at Ketchum, one of the largest fund-raisers on the world). *“People give to people ... not to causes.”*

Donors want to know that the Fund Raiser is honest, committed to their cause, and knowledgeable about the workings of the Recipient.

My wife and I tithe, so the math is simple. We take last year’s income, multiply by 10%, and determine this year’s level of Philanthropy. Some years it’s more ... some years less.”

W. Thomas Sawyer
Hulls Cove, ME

EDUCATION ISSUES in the NEWS

MAINE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATE

LD 1640, An Act to Permit Public Charter Schools in Maine was introduced to the Maine Legislation and would allow up to 20 chartered public schools over 10 years to address the needs of children at risk in Maine. It was introduced in 2005 with a bi-partisan group of co-sponsors. The Legislature’s Education Committee held a public hearing in May 2005 and at the request of the Commissioner of Education the bill was carried over until 2006.

Public chartered schools are fully public schools: they are not religious; they are free to families of income levels. They exchange flexibility in operations for increased accountability for results and are highly accountable. The funding of public chartered schools requires no new funds from either the state or towns. In 40 other states, 3,625 chartered public schools educate over one million children.

The Maine Association for Public Charter Schools is working with over two dozen groups committed and ready to create options within Maine’s system of public education to address the needs of children at risk.

For the complete update see www.mecsf.org

For more information on charter schools see www.mainecharter-schools.org

HURRICANE RELIEF BILL SETS HUMANITARIAN EXAMPLE

“This is the largest school choice program ever enacted,” noted Clint Bolick, whose Phoenix-based Alliance for School Choice worked hard for HERA. “We hope it will serve as a model for future efforts to redress educational crises throughout the nation.”

For the full report on this article please go to www.mecsf.org.

AUTISTIC CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN NOW HAVE VOUCHERS

A Scholarship program in Wisconsin would allow the parents of children with autism to choose the school best suited to their children’s needs and could help pave the way for school choice options of others.

On December 14, 2005, the Wisconsin State Assembly voted 62-33 in favor of a program that would provide school vouchers for 200 children with autism. The Scholarships would allow them to attend private schools or treatment programs chosen by their parents. At press time, the bill was headed to the Senate education committee, and no date had been set for a hearing.

For the full report on this article please go to www.mecsf.org.

WHAT IS MAINE CHILDREN’S SCHOLARSHIP FUND?

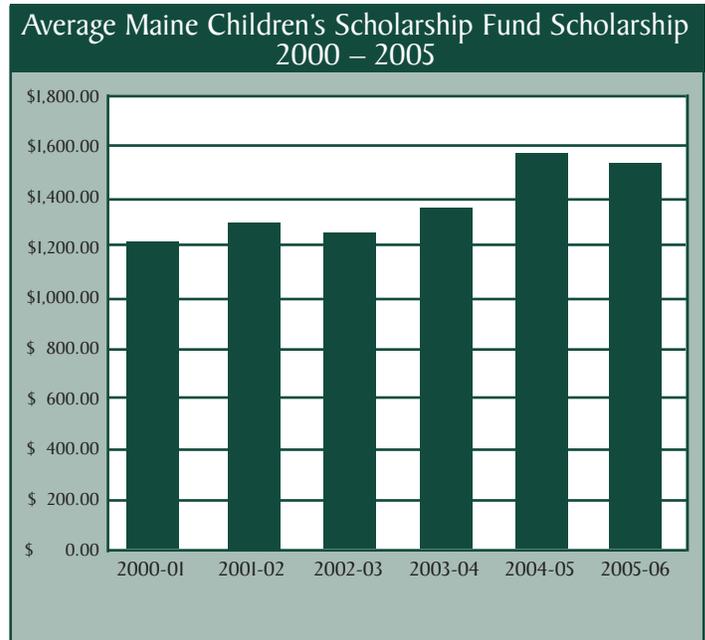
The Maine Children’s Scholarship Fund (MCSF) provides scholarships to Maine children in grades K-12 to help pay for part of public, private or home-school expenses. MCSF provides 75 percent of tuition per child up to \$1,700 and the families contribute at least 25 percent. MCSF reimburses home schooling cost up to \$500 per child. Scholarships are awarded to all school aged children in a family. To qualify, family income must be at or below the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

SCHOLARSHIPS COUNT

WHY? It empowers parents to make the best decision about their child's education by lowering financial barriers. It helps fill the gap in education funding for parents who are denied access to educational opportunities because of low income.

Referring to the graph you can see that the 2005/2006 average scholarship is approximately \$1,500.

This is our way of assisting families committed to education excellence, but we can not do it without your support, won't you please help us with a generous contribution.



BOOK REVIEW

EDUCATION MYTHS

by Jay P. Greene, Ph.D.

Mainers deeply committed to education excellence will find *Education Myths* a must read. This timely, plain-spoken, myth-demolishing book unmasks the most damaging myths.

Whether through self-interest, naiveté, or well-intended gullibility, many people embrace these eighteen seductive assumptions about education; they are myths and turn out to be false.

According to author Jay P. Greene Ph.D., "Myths aren't lies. They're beliefs that people adopt because they have an air of plausibility, people want to believe they're true, and they are consistent with at least some pieces of evidence. But, of course, myths aren't true-or at least they're not the whole truth. This book identifies, catalogues, and rebuts eighteen common myths that dominate education policy. Dispelling these myths would open the door to substantial improvements of our nation's schools."

Education myths permeate our thinking. From myths about resources: "schools perform poorly because they need more money", "special education programs burden public schools, hindering their academic performance", "social problems like poverty cause students to fail: schools are helpless to prevent it," "schools should reduce class sizes; small classes would produce big improvements", "certified or more experienced teachers are substantially more effective", and finally the perennial "teachers are badly underpaid."

We hold many myths about outcomes such as: "schools are performing much worse than they used to", "nearly all students graduate from high school", and the widely held myth that "nonacademic barriers prevent a lot of minority students from attending college."

We even question accountability with concerns that: "the results of high stakes tests are not credible because they're distorted by cheating and teaching to the test", "exit exams cause more students to drop out of high school", and the ever present objection that "accountability systems impose large financial burdens on schools."

Parental choice in education is vilified with numerous myths such as: "the evidence on the effectiveness of vouchers is mixed and inconclusive," "private schools have higher test scores because they have more money and recruit high-performing students while expelling low-performing students", "school choice harms public schools", "private schools won't serve disabled students", "private schools are less effective at promoting tolerance and civic participation", and of course "private schools are more racially segregated than public schools."

Mainers committed to improving education will want to understand these myths because misinformation blocks promising reforms that our schools and children urgently need. Effective education reform is built on a foundation of facts; myths retard progress.

Author Jay P. Greene, Ph.D. is a leading education researcher. His research has been cited in U. S. Supreme Court opinions and his articles have appeared in *The Public Interest*, *City Journal*, *Education Next*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. Dr. Greene is the Chair of the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas. He received his B.A. in history from Tufts University and his Ph.D. in Government from Harvard University.

“In our family,
 so many sacrifices are
 made for our children,
 but each is worthwhile
 in order to give them
 the best possible
 educational start,
 in a caring environment.”

Grateful mother of a
 5th year scholarship student

Help a student on our scholarship waiting list with your contribution

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift to Maine Children’s Scholarship Fund

- \$50 Believer
 \$1000 Leader’s Circle
 \$100 Supporter
 Other

Please make checks payable to Maine Children’s Scholarship Fund.

Contact us for information about gifting of appreciated securities.

Name _____

Address _____

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Email _____

Please mail to: Maine Children’s Scholarship Fund
 27 State Street, Suite 64A
 Bangor ME 04401

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 27 State Street, Suite 64A
 Bangor, Maine 04401