



THE ISLAND SCHOLARS NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the second edition of the Island Scholars Parent Newsletter.

This newsletter is part of the brand new Island Scholars Network, which provides different ways for all Maine Island Scholarship recipients and their families to talk and support each other. This is the parents' edition of the newsletter; a separate letter has been sent to your college student's email. The parents' edition will focus on upcoming deadlines, and ways to make your student's time in college easier, and (hopefully) yours, too. Any feedback, ideas, or subjects you would like to see in the future can be sent to bodgren@islandinstitute.org.

SPOTTING SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

Many students, both new to college and returning, are looking for scholarships. And who wouldn't? Given the current economic situation, free money to help pay for college is certainly better than a loan you'll have to pay back with interest. There are lots of scholarships out there, and doing some digging around on the Internet and at the library (a simple step that many don't take) can lead you to scholarships you didn't know about before.

The downside is that there are a lot of scholarship "scams" out there. The Federal Trade Commission website (<http://www.ftc.gov>) has several tips for how to spot, and report, scholarship scams. But here are a few tell-tale signs to get you started.

1. They'll say things like "The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back." Red flag. No scholarship is ever guaranteed to anybody. You shouldn't have to pay more than the price of a postage stamp in order to get information about the scholarship.

Which brings us to...

2. ...applying for the scholarship. You and your child have to do this yourselves. There is no way around it. If you get something in the mail saying, "You're a finalist in our sketchy scholarship program!" – and you didn't enter in the first place – throw it in the nearest trash can.

3. In line with that, any scholarship exclaiming, "We'll do all the work for you!" means that they'll probably want some sort of fee when it's all said and done. Free money shouldn't cost you a cent (except for the postage); otherwise it wouldn't be free money. You should be spending more time than money on possible scholarships.

4. "Everybody is eligible!" Not true. There are always restrictions – always some guidelines as to whom the scholarship is meant to go towards. Some are for athletes or people with disabilities. Some are aimed towards minorities. Some scholarships give out awards to people who are left-handed, or who have an uncommon name. No scholarship is awarded solely on the basis that you are alive.

5. There are some programs that claim to be scholarship matching services. Don't trust them. These people have no influence with legitimate scholarship programs. They can't slip five bucks into the maitre d's pocket and get you the table by the window with the candles...so to speak.

Make sure to visit the Federal Trade Commission website (<http://www.ftc.gov>) for more tips about scholarship scams.



Scholarship Deadlines

There are several scholarship deadlines approaching – be sure you and your student have the paperwork completed before the due date of the scholarship.

The James and Marilyn Rockefeller Scholarship Fund provides scholarships for residents under the age of 35 with a passion to learn at the post-secondary level. Applications are available at <http://www.mainecef.org>, and are due by **December 1, 2008**.

The Maine Island Scholarship application is due by **April 1, 2009**. Check the Island Institute website for the updated application.

DEALING WITH A HOMESICK STUDENT

One of the reasons why students end up leaving college prematurely is because, no matter how cool they act, when homesickness hits, it hits hard. And it doesn't take much to bring them back to the comfort of home. Homesickness is normal and, given time, is a feeling that goes away (it took me my entire freshman year).

So here are a few tips for dealing with homesick students.

1. Write them letters and emails, even if they don't write back. Sometimes they forget to write back. Sometimes they just don't write back. Let them know that you're thinking about them..
2. Be supportive – but don't solve their problems for them. College is a time when (if they aren't already) young people have to learn to fend for themselves. They have to be the responsible ones now and can't rely on you to fix things when they make mistakes. They are accountable for their actions. If you've already planted the seeds of independence in them – which I'm sure you have – they'll be fine.
3. If they call with urgent "I want to come home!" messages – BE CALM. Listen to them. Ask questions. Try to calm them down. If it's a roommate issue, have them sort it out with their Resident Adviser (RA) at the dorm. If it's a class issue, suggest that they see if they can easily drop the class for a new one.

This is probably old news to you if you're reading this, as your student is still in college and doing well. Please feel free to share this with others. You know first-hand the experience of sending a child off to school, and sharing some wisdom could be what helps some one else's student walk across the stage at graduation.

How can we help?

Sending a child off to college, for the first time or not, is not a simple thing these days. This newsletter is a good place to compare notes, share ideas, and offer support. We'd like this to be as helpful and informative a newsletter as possible — so any feedback, ideas, or subjects you would like to see in the future can be sent to bodgren@islandinstitute.org. Thanks for reading!



Benjamin Odgren is the Island Scholar's Network Coordinator at the Island Institute.

He is working at the Island Institute through AmeriCorp: a government-funded national community service organization. He will be creating newsletters, hosting college-awareness programs on the islands, and creating a social network between college-bound islanders.

If you see him on the island, and he looks lost, please help him.