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Quotable

"Every ceiling when reached, becomes a floor, upon which one walks as a matter of course and prescriptive right."

—Aldous Huxley

Aid helps fulfill dreams



"The Kennedy-King Scholarship proved to me that all my hard work in college had really paid off."

— Renee Sproles-Fovel

By ANA L. GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Kennedy-King Scholarship Fund that has, throughout the years, helped struggling minority students achieve their higher education dreams—dreams that many find elusive because of the lack of money to pay the high tuitions at four-year institutions.

The Kennedy-King scholarship was created in 1968, after the deaths of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., to help minority groups — African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders pay part of the cost of the tuition, and to help them become successful individuals and residents who will later help their own communities. It has distributed more than \$2 million in scholarship aid over the years.

Without having the money to pay for college, many students who are qualified to go to four-year institutions are not able to accomplish their goals, said scholarship fund Vice President J. Ernest Hartz, who added that this scholarship has helped many of those struggling students but the sad thing is that there are more students out there who need financial assistance and deserve to get it.

Also, the founders and volunteers of this scholarship are working together to provide more opportunities for those minorities who are unrepresented in four-year institutions. By providing this help, they hope to help these groups achieve their goals.

"Since we believe the key to realizing that dream cannot be fully achieved without the opportunity to attend college, it seems to us that one of the most concrete ways to work toward

that goal is to raise college scholarship funds," said Hartz.

Throughout the years, the scholarship founders have helped a number of students to not only achieve their goals but to also open up and tell their stories, their life struggles in life and why they deserve to win this scholarship.

"We have had students who have suffered unbelievable physical and mental abuse of every kind. Others have been victims of substance abuse. Some have been homeless, while others have lost parents. Some have had difficult lives due to physical disabilities. And many worked several jobs while going to school, raising a family and still finding time to help and mentor others in the community," said Hartz.

Former LMC student Renee Sproles-Fovel was one of those scholarship

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winners who got the chance to tell her story, her struggles that changed her life.

But according to Sproles-Fovel, a student journalist, she did not know if she could qualify until she had to cover the story of the Kennedy-King scholarship for the LMC *Experience*. Once there she found out she was able to apply she "decided to give it a try, so I filled out the paperwork, [and] wrote my story," said Sproles-Fovel.

"The story I wrote was about my mother's death due to ovarian cancer and some other life-changing events that happened around that same time. I admit it seems like a lifetime ago. I would never have never done it if it hadn't been for the encouragement of [LMC instructor] Cindy McGrath," added Sproles-Fovel.

After submitting the application and the story, Sproles-Fovel waited for the Scholarship Fund to announce the winners.

"I felt confident about the story I had written, but still I have to

admit I was shocked when it was announced I was one of the winners," said Sproles-Fovel.

Thanks to this scholarship she was able to achieve her goals and enrolled at San Francisco State where she earned a bachelor's in Women Studies and graduated Magna Cum Laude.

"The Kennedy-King Scholarship proved to me that all my hard work in college had really paid off; that killing myself over my grades every semester was for something," said Sproles-Fovel.

Now she is helping the Oakland community where she is a program coordinator for a nonprofit retirement community, a job she said she would never have never got if it was not for the degree she obtained at San Francisco State.

She enjoys what she is doing now and added "I can say that I genuinely love my residents and admire the accomplishments they have achieved in their lifetimes."

"But," she explained, "None of this could have been possible without the incredible education I received from Los Medanos College and the

Kennedy-King Scholarship," said Sproles-Fovel.

She encourages current students to apply for this scholarship because it helps a lot and because "it was one of the best decisions I ever made," added Sproles-Fovel.

In addition to Sproles-Fovel, there are a number of Kennedy-King recipients who have become successful and have helped their communities. According to scholarship fund President Bill Pollacek, scholars such as Senior Deputy District Attorney in the Alameda County DA's office Mark Jackson and writer Craig Dandridge, who has worked for companies like Tokyo Disney Resort and Vodafone KK, and has lived in Japan for the past 16 years.

The first two scholarships were given in 1969 and from that date to now, the number of scholarships has increased. According to LMC Acting Foundation Director Lindy Wille there will be 40 scholarships given this year.

Also, "This scholarship is much more than just about money. Recipients are also assigned to mentors

[of their field] for the two years they are receiving the awards," said Wille.

According to the website, the Kennedy-King Scholarship "has awarded 511 scholarships, for a total of \$2,210,000" in the past 40 years and, thanks to the contributions and support of community residents and organizations, the amount of this scholarship has increased since 1968.

Also, the website stated that these students have been "chosen for their [financial] need, academic promise, determination to obtain an education, leadership potential and commitment to help their community."

The Kennedy-King is a two-year scholarship in which recipients receive \$4,000 each year for a total of \$8,000. So, hurry and submit your applications, the deadline is right around the corner. The last date to submit an application will be Feb. 15, 2008. For more information on how to get an application go to www.kennedy-king.org or www.losmedanos.edu and click on "Scholarships" on the right-hand side.