

It's Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship Time Again!

So what's in YOUR wallet? It could be a scholarship from Teachers of Tomorrow (TOT)! The time to apply is right around the corner, so if your GPA is 2.8 or better, and you have successfully completed at least 15 college credits, think about applying. Here's how:

1. Plan to be enrolled at GRCC for Fall 2015 with at least 6 credits.
2. Have an Academic Code that indicates "Education" as your career goal—120, 130, 206, 207, 420, 602, 803, or 804.
3. Submit a completed GRCC Foundation Scholarship application and unofficial copy of your transcripts to Financial Aid by **March 16**. (Applications are available from Financial Aid, 156 Main Building.)
4. Submit the following to Staci Dever, 266 Main Building, by **March 16 at 5 p.m.**
 - A completed Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship application form.
 - A 500-word essay, double-spaced, on the following topic: *What are three qualities of an effective teacher? Use examples from your personal experience that illustrate each of those qualities.* This essay will be evaluated on both qualities of content and mechanical accuracy. (See page 4, Tips on Scholarship Essays and Recommendations.)
 - Two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a GRCC faculty or staff member. Both letters must be on letterhead stationary, and include both contact information for the individual writing the letter and your relationship to that person.
 - Your resume, including an indication of your specific teaching subject majors and minors, as well as the grade level you are interested in. (Examples: grades K-3 math and language arts, middle school English and history, high school chemistry and physics. Just indicating "elementary education" is not sufficient.)



For more information, contact Staci Dever, sdever@grcc.edu or Carole Redwine, credwine@grcc.edu. Applications are reviewed in May. If you are selected, you will be notified shortly thereafter.

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Two TOT Scholarships:

The Gertrude Croom TOT Scholarship

This scholarship was established by Gertrude Grant Croom, a now retired but long time Social Science faculty member at Grand Rapids Community College. Scholarships will be awarded to African American students who want to pursue a degree in the field of Elementary or Secondary Education. As full-time students at Grand Rapids Community College, they must have successfully completed a minimum of 12 credit hours, with no grade less than 'C,' and an overall GPA of 2.8 or better. Students must submit an application and required essay to the Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship Program by **March 16, 2015**. Contact Carole Redwine, Teacher Education Support Services, (616) 234-4664.

The Alexa and Alek Zapata TOT Scholarship

Two \$780 scholarships are available to students of Hispanic descent who are enrolled on a full- or part-time basis at GRCC. Recipients must have achieved a minimum 2.8 GPA and intend to secure a degree in Elementary Education. Award recipients will be evaluated by the Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship committee.

ALERT! Old Curriculum Codes Have Changed

Please check with Staci Dever in the Child Development office to make sure you are coded correctly for transfer. Majors now look different in our computer system, and this is crucial if you want to enroll in certain classes such as BI 101 for Educators (BI 101-E) or receive important emails from the Child Development/Education Department.

Student Employment Services

Student Employment Services is looking to fill several community positions, including:

1. Exhibit Facilitator at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum
2. Mentoring Program Assistant at Baxter Community House
3. Various Tutoring and Teachers Assistant Positions

If you are interested in any of these, you **MUST** be work-study eligible. To determine if you qualify, you may visit the Financial Aid office. Please let the FA staff members know that you are interested in community service work study positions and that they are checking to see if you would be eligible for work study funds. If you do receive an award, you may then visit our office (103 Main Building) to fill out an application and receive a referral from our staff. All positions pay \$8.15 per hour. You **MUST** be enrolled for the Winter semester with at least 6 GRCC credits to qualify.

Interested? Contact Staci Dever in the Child Development office or Luanne Wedge in the Student Employment Services office for more information.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE for Winter 2015 Semester

As always, we invite you to attend our monthly seminars. The topics are timely and the presenters are enthusiastic and ready to share their knowledge. We hope to see you there!

FEBRUARY 18, 2015

3:30-4:45 p.m.; 168 Wisner-Bottrall Applied Technology Center

MARCH 24, 2015

2-3:30 p.m.; 120 Wisner-Bottrall Applied Technology Center

APRIL 9, 2015

Annual End-of-Year Ice Cream Social
3:30-4:45 p.m.; 122/124 Wisner-Bottrall Applied Technology Center

Teacher Education Seminar Highlight

On November 13, principals from Christian and charter schools discussed what candidates can expect if they choose to teach in their particular type of schools. Catholic schools, of course, are faith-based but also want their teachers to be well-rounded, not just focused on content. They should be able to contribute to extra-curricular activities such as speech and drama, athletics, or even dance. Charter schools abide by all public school laws and regulations, but can be either for-profit or non-profit. Both schools represented said that they encouraged their teachers to engage in reflective teaching.



Seminar presenters Kevin Varner, principal of Our Lady of Consolation School in Rockford and Jason Bannister, GRCC alumnus and principal of Grand River Preparatory Academy.



Mr. Varner explains Christian school expectations.



Mr. Bannister points out charter school differences.

Sharing the Holiday Spirit

In November, the Child Development/ Education student organization decorated food bags for Kids' Food Basket sack suppers. They wanted to be sure that the children receiving those bags felt loved as well as fed. It was an activity that helped to address an issue discussed below in the August 2014 Kids' Food Basket newsletter.

Hunger and Obesity Are Connected

"Sack suppers are important to establishing healthy habits and delivering consistent, nutrition-dense foods to children in our community. They are a step on the path to well-being."

"Studies show children in low-income and food insecure homes are up to two times more likely to be considered overweight or obese. Why? Children in low-income households are often eating low cost, high-calorie foods because families are forced to stretch their budget. Since the 1980's, the cost of fruits and vegetables has increased 40%, while

the cost of processed foods has declined 40%. Additionally, households may be situated in communities that lack access to quality, healthy foods while an abundance of convenience stores and fast-food restaurants populate the area. Many kids will go through cycles of overeating when food is present to fasting when there is a lack of food. These ups and downs result in the human body storing fat, creating a domino effect where children are left hungry and overweight." Dr. Vas Janardan, Mercy Health Saint Mary's said, "I think many people read about the epidemic of obesity in this country and it may be easy for people to see children that may be underprivileged and not getting nutrition but still being quoted 'overweight.' They might be overweight, but they're not nourished."

This article, then, says to us as teachers, that we must realize the importance that being well-nourished has on a child's ability to do well in school. Enough food of a proper diet gives children the stamina it takes to be thoroughly engaged in their learning.

Homeless High Schoolers Face Barriers to Education

This is the next in a series of "Hot Topics" in education for your consideration and analysis. It is from the September 29, 2014 US News and World Reports education blog on homelessness among high school students. It was written by Alexandra Pannoni.

Homelessness among public school students is at an all-time high, and teens without a home face unique challenges.

"Some teens are homeless with their families. But others are on their own, simply trying to get through life without anyone looking out for their well-being," says Barbara Duffield, director of policy and programs at the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. "They are typically homeless because of a very bad situation at home, abuse, or neglect," she says of unaccompanied homeless teens. "On the flip side, teens who are homeless with their families may be in a parental role, taking care of younger siblings. Of the nearly 1.26 million public school students who were homeless during the 2012-2013 school year, about 317,000 were in high school, according to data released last week from the National Center for Homeless Education.

"Public schools are required under federal law to ensure homeless students have access to a free public education. Homeless youth are allowed to stay in their school, regardless of where they end up, and schools must provide students transportation to that school."

"Districts have a designated liaison whose duties include identifying homeless youth, enrolling students in school, coordinating transportation and connecting students with other agencies to have their basic needs met," Duffield says. "But schools are not required to provide housing."

"At 17, kids are aging out of foster care, not aging into foster care," says Beth McCullough, home and school liaison for Adrian Public Schools in Michigan. "Housing is among the biggest challenges for the teens she works with, she says, and foster care has not usually been an option for older teens."

McCullough, who is also the homeless education coordinator for Lenawee and Monroe counties in Michigan, says that the schools and community organizations in the area work together to place homeless teens with other families in the community and to

provide them with the additional support they need to succeed. The families who take the homeless students in act as mentors to the teens and help them transition to adulthood. "These kids know that education is their way out of what they went through," [McCullough] says.

Young people who experience homelessness were 87 percent more likely to stop going to school, according to the 2014 *Don't Call Them Dropouts* report from the America's Promise Alliance and its Center for Promise at Tufts University. But when the services offered by public schools aren't enough for these students, some community organizations fill the void.

Cheryl Opper, founder and executive director of Schools on Wheels of Massachusetts says, "Most of the schools' systems are already stretched with the funding. Most of the funding goes toward the transportation for students to get back and forth to school." Her organization provides homeless teens with additional support to help them graduate high school and continue their education. When the day comes, they also help students move into college, Opper says. "We become their family support system."

Volunteer Opportunities

You can support a GRPS student by becoming a Volunteer Reading Tutor. The Schools of Hope Reading Program pairs students in grades 1-3 that are behind in reading skills with volunteers who work one-on-one with the same student once a week for 30 minutes during the school

day. Data shows this program is having an impact on early grade reading.

Volunteers are required to attend one two-hour training session. To register for training, see a list of participating schools and more information go to

www.hwmuw.org/soh or contact Ms. Jane Royer, Volunteer Center Director, Heart of West Michigan United Way, 118 Commerce Ave., SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (616) 752-8603.

teacher EDUCATION

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Tips on Scholarship Essays and Recommendations

Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship Re-application Essay

The Teachers of Tomorrow (TOT) Scholarships are renewable scholarships, and as long as you continue to meet the established criteria, you may reapply. However, the essay portion of the application has a different prompt. Because you have had a year of additional course work, seminars, volunteer activities, and mentoring, you should be able to demonstrate how you connect those to your ongoing teacher preparation. Therefore, your new prompt is this:

“Reflect upon your growth as a future teacher during this academic year. Use examples from both your course work and personal experiences to illustrate your commitment to the teaching profession.”

As indicated for your first scholarship essay, this essay will also be evaluated on both the quality of its content as well as its mechanical accuracy.

What Makes a Good Letter of Recommendation?

It is important that all Teachers of Tomorrow applicants have TWO letters of recommendation as part of their application file.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when asking for individuals to write these letters:

1. Do NOT ask relatives. Letters should come from persons outside of your family who can be more objective. These can be former teachers, ministers, youth leaders, or job supervisors. One letter is required to be from a GRCC faculty member.
2. These people should have known you for at least six months.
3. They should be very specific about special skills you have demonstrated in the context that they know you.
4. They should comment on your positive character traits.
5. They should address why they feel you would make a good teacher.

Strong and specific letters of recommendation are always an asset to your professional file. Those who read these letters tend to give more weight to the ones that follow these guidelines.

Two Tips for Writing a Good Scholarship Essay

When your essay is evaluated for the TOT Scholarships, the committee expects to see a quality of writing that demonstrates commitment to a professional level of communication

and thinking. After all, it is what will be required of you as an educator.

First, this means that you should not only include specific examples to illustrate your key points, but also think beyond the usual responses to this question: yes, there are obvious qualities of effective teachers, but what are some that may NOT be so obvious? By identifying and analyzing those, you show a greater depth of thinking.

Second, be sure that your essay demonstrates mechanical accuracy with proper punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, because the best ideas can be undermined by a lack of attention to these details.

Acceptable essays, then, will meet the following basic standard:

- reflect a clear understanding of the prompt
- use of lively language, details and examples to illustrate strong main ideas.
- approach to the prompt is original and demonstrates an awareness of the necessity for connecting with your audience.

No more than three errors appear across the categories of mechanics as listed above.

