

FSPA scholarship awards

By Wendy Parker Barsell, FSPA Executive Director

Each year the Florida Swimming Pool Association awards scholarships to college-age students who are dependents of FSPA members, which means that a parent must work for or own a company that has been a member of FSPA for at least two years. On average, \$20,000 is awarded annually and distributed to more than 20 students studying at all levels of post-secondary education, including doctorate work.

The scholarship selection committee met in May to award this year's scholarships and once again it was a great group of applicants. All recipients must maintain a 3.0 GPA to qualify and be active in their school and community. An interesting statistic: in the past year, the scholarship application was viewed from the FSPA Web site approximately 200 times, but just 23 students applied.

For the first time, students were asked to write about their greatest accomplishment. The responses to this were impressive, providing insight into the student's personality that we've not had before.

The required 700-1,500 word research paper asks students applying for the first time to learn about the Florida Swimming Pool Association and the role trade associations play in American business. Previous award recipients research a variety of topics which this year included the health and fitness advantages of swimming and water therapy, the housing bubble, pool safety legislation and chlorine as a sanitizing agent. All recipients' research papers can be found on the FSPA Web site on the scholarship programs page. I encourage you to take time to read a few, in particular Traci Bludsworth's paper on water therapy.

I share information about this program for a couple of reasons. First, these students are our future and each one has a parent who is a member of our industry. These kids may return from college to run the family pool business and many will become teachers, counselors, scientists or even interior designers. Secondly, the scholarship fund is supported only by contributions from our members. An annual contribution from Insurance by Ken Brown for \$5,000, which is matched by FSPA, provides ongoing support. When you renew your dues this year, consider including \$50 for the scholarship fund, or even just \$25. Contributions go directly to the Swimming Pool Education and Safety Foundation and are 100% tax deductible. This is an easy and rewarding way to give back to the industry and your community.