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LINDENWOOD

Eagle Scouts Flock to Lindenwood

From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Lindenwood University is forming something of an Eagle Scout nest with scholarships aimed at service-oriented students.

The university offers \$1 million each year in scholarships to students involved with service organizations. President Dennis Spellmann said Boy Scouts have especially taken advantage of that program, and the university has hired a recruiter who focuses on bringing Scouts to the school.

"They say eagles don't flock," said Spellmann, an Eagle Scout himself. "You've got to find them one at a time, but we've got a whole flock of them here."

The university estimates that next fall, it will count more than 100 Eagle Scouts among its students. They come from across the country.

Jackie Smith, an admissions and financial aid counselor for Lindenwood, said the university isn't just seeking Boy Scouts. The Million Dollar Character Scholarship program offers opportunities for students in about 16 nonprofit groups, including the National Council on Youth Leadership, the YMCA, United Way, Key Club International, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Junior Achievement and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Smith said Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts who earn Scout of the Year honors can receive full-tuition scholarships of \$12,000 per year. Others who apply through the scholarship program can receive \$6,000 per year, she said, and each scholarship is offered along with the potential for \$2,400 in room and board expenses through a work-and-learn program Lindenwood offers. Full-time tuition and housing at the university is \$18,000 a year.

"What the whole program does is really just tries to build character in the kids," Smith said.

Smith said about 50 new students have signed up for the scholarship program for the coming school year; it has served 75 to 100 students each year. The program has no application deadline, she said.

About five months ago, the university added Chris Burnette to its admissions staff. An Eagle Scout and former Boy Scout executive, Burnette's duties include being the school's Scouting Program coordinator.

"I have the best job ever devised," he said. "I get to find, recruit and help Eagle Scouts pursue a higher education. I also get to motivate them and encourage them to become leaders. We want to change the world, and I love the fact that I do it every day."

Spellmann has been involved in Scouting since 1945. He now is a member of the council executive committee of the Greater St. Louis Area Council of Boy Scouts of America.

He said Lindenwood wants to recognize students who are involved in service organizations. "I'm really proud that we're able to put our dollars behind the statement that we value good citizenship," he said.

For more information about the scholarship program, call Smith at 636-949-4949.

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