

Student's forum

This Week's Question:

As you are growing up, would you rather have your mom stay at home with you or would you rather she go to work?

Answers to Last Week's Question:

What is your hobby? Tell us about it.

I like to wrestle with my Pitbulls on a daily basis.

A.T.

My favorite hobby is baking. My best friend and I always bake together and have a great time finding new recipes to try. Our latest creations have been doughnuts, pretzels and bread! Her brothers love to sample our creations.

J.S.

I collect coins from all around the world. Some of my family members live in different parts of the world so whenever they visit or we visit them I get coins from that city. Now everyone knows I collect coins so when our friends visit other countries they bring me coins as souvenirs. My mom gave me some paper bills-money that she has been collecting but I like the coins better since they are easier to keep in better shape.

P.M.

Making jewelry with metals and natural stones, quilting and reading.

L.A.

Building dollhouses is one of my hobbies. I electrified the dollhouse I am currently

working on. To electrify a dollhouse, it requires a lot of tedious work and I had to take a class to learn how to do this. It was worth it because I have miniature outlets for lamps, overhead lighting and porch lighting for my dollhouse!

M.A.

I have three hobbies actually! My first one is collecting stamps. I love all the designs that are on the stamps! My second one is collecting rocks. I've found many different kinds of rocks; I found one that is shaped like a heart also! Last but not least, collecting seashells! They come in various kinds, I adore the pink ones!

E.N.

Well, I really like doing a lot of things. Right now I'm learning about body language and micro expressions, which can pretty much let people "read your mind" through little movements and twitches and stuff. It's so cool!

K.F.

Cooking is my favorite hobby, especially now that the weather is cooler.

B.M.

Send all submissions to
students@heraldpublications.com

Saving Money on College Tuition with WUE

By Michelle Lanphere Green

Did you know that a college-bound student from California could attend the University of Hawaii, Washington State University, or the University of Oregon at a substantial discount? There are dozens of two and four-year college options that provide a big tuition discount to students who live in the sixteen states that participate in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program.

When a student applies to a college that is outside of their home state, they typically have to pay "out of state" tuition fees, which can be up to three times the cost of what an "in-state" student might pay. Public, or state colleges, offer low tuition prices to students who are residents of the state because of tax dollar subsidies. An out-of-state student will almost always pay at a higher rate, because they haven't been contributing to the tax base that lowers these tuition costs and other student fees. This can add up to quite a lot of money. For example, a student coming to UCLA from Arizona or Colorado will likely pay over \$40,000 in tuition, housing and fees for just one year of attendance.

The WUE program allows prospective students a chance to attend participating colleges outside of a student's home state, but with the tuition capped at 150 percent of what a resident of that state might pay. Some colleges even charge less than this rate, offering big discounts and renewable scholarships to students interested in attending and making that state their home for the

next four years. Not every public university in the participating states offers WUE. For those that do, this can provide students with affordable options to experience a great education at a bargain price.

In order to get the discount, students must apply at the time of their initial college application, usually by checking a box on the application. There is no additional application or fee involved with this program. Students can log on to <http://wue.wiche.edu/> to learn more about this and which colleges are participating in this program.

While every college on the WUE list offers tuition discounts, there are rules about which programs qualify for the program. Not every major is WUE-eligible, but the information is easily found in the student section of the WUE website, in the "List All WUE institutions" section on the student page. By clicking through to the specific college, it is possible to see if there are any programs or majors that don't offer the discount.

While California experiences a major funding crisis of its notable public colleges and universities, applying to WUE can provide an affordable option for prospective students willing to cross state lines for a college education. For more information, check out: <http://wue.wiche.edu/>

My College Admissions Coach offers personalized help for students and their parents as they navigate the college search and admissions process. Follow my blog at: <http://collegeoptions.blogspot.com/>

Three Pieces of the MBUSD Funding Pie

By Darren Sepanek

Many parents with children in the public schools feel like they are regularly asked to buy something or donate to support their schools: Cookie dough, wrapping paper, magazines, jog-a-thons, PTA membership, education foundations... The list goes on and on. Why do these different entities ask for money, how do they use it and why don't they merge into one giant pot?

In the Manhattan Beach School District (District), there are three main private fundraising bodies to support the schools and students – the school PTAs, the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF) and the Manhattan Beach Athletic Foundation (MBAF). Each serves a distinct purpose and, believe it or not, their functions do not cross.

As we look at why these three entities raise money, it is important to first understand that the District is responsible for providing Los Angeles County with a three-year budget plan. This means that any private contributions designated for salaries must be available for a three-year period. The California Education Code requires that school districts prepare their budgets such that on March 15 of each year, commitments must be made to all certificated personnel (i.e. teachers) regarding their positions and salaries for the coming school year. These requirements make it difficult for most fundraising bodies to finance salaried positions.

As two pieces of the funding pie, MBEF and the PTAs work closely together to support a quality education with MBEF paying for people and PTAs paying for things and programs. For example, MBEF pays for the

librarian and PTA pays for books. MBEF pays for the computer lab teacher, while PTA pays for the computer.

PTAs collect money and hold fundraisers each year in order to help support programs and buy supplies for their school. PTAs are not able to pay for salaries because they raise and commit funds on an annual basis. They do not know year to year what level of funding they can achieve, making a three-year commitment to salaries impossible. Additionally, the California PTA has strict bylaws regulating how much a (school) PTA is allowed to keep in reserves and carry forward year to year. Theoretically, PTAs should raise funds they feel are necessary for one school year, allocating these funds to planned programs and items annually.

Education foundations are not held to the same restrictions as PTAs when it comes to carrying reserves. In fact, education foundations often have endowments established to secure long-term funding of salaries and programs. Currently, MBEF has \$4.5 million in its endowment. According to MBEF by-laws, the endowment must reach \$10 million before a portion of the interest income can be used to supplement MBEF's annual grants to the District—hence the reason the MBEF annual fundraising drive is still so essential. Some donations have been specifically designated for the endowment, resulting in the \$4.5 million balance. Other than those specified for the endowment, all donations to MBEF are allocated in full to grants for the subsequent school year. Because parents have chosen to give generously to MBEF, the Foundation has enough funding

to meet the MBUSD, Los Angeles County and California Education Code requirements for funding teacher salaries.

As a non-profit, fundraising organization, MBEF is independent from the District. The MBEF board of directors, along with the MBEF grants committee, makes critical decisions regarding the allocation of grants using input from the District and MBEF donors. MBEF controls the grants allocated to the District; it does not write a blank check to the District. Although grants from MBEF fund teacher salaries, MBEF does not employ the teachers and it does not control salaries or hiring. This is managed by the District. MBUSD actually bills MBEF semi-annually for actual costs incurred.

MBEF is a very transparent organization. Details on how funds are utilized are featured on the MBEF website as well as in the MBEF newsletters and annual report. MBEF meetings (held the second Tuesday of every month) are open to the public and questions and input from donors are highly encouraged.

The Manhattan Beach Athletic Foundation (MBAF) was formed in 2002 to provide financial support for high school athletic programs. Due to cuts in state funding, MBUSD can no longer support all of the associated costs of a comprehensive athletic program. MBAF assists the District by administering after-school programs at elementary school sites, Camp VIP (a summer program for elementary and middle school students) and a summer school program for high school students. Profits from these programs along with funds from a variety of fundraisers and

parent donations are used to fund capital improvements at Mira Costa High School such as the renovation of Fisher Gym and Waller Stadium as well as paying for athletic programs (coaches' stipends, transportation, the sports trainer, supplies and safety equipment). MBEF does not support sports programs and is often termed the "academic booster" club, whereas MBAF is now the centralized athletic booster club.

MBUSD is very fortunate to have three organizations all working very hard to support different elements of a first-rate education for our children.



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