

Historian's History

Scholarship in AWC has a loonngg History!

Our scholarship history is hazy for the very earliest years of the Mother's Club with the Club's devotion to Alamo School and the library.

1939 – In June 1939, a scrapbook article shows a scholarship was given of **\$50** to David Ocumpaugh a San Ramon Valley High School graduate. That was quite a sum of money in those days when the club was giving \$1 each to Cancer Control work and Christmas Seals! Interpretation is left to the reader as to whether this was a first scholarship given by the Club or a continuation of the program.

1943 - It appears that during the WWII era that wartime help was the preoccupation of our club through veteran, military and Red Cross work. Scrapbook references note that in 1943 the club voted to 'pay its share' to aid in the nurse's scholarship given by Federation but a year later the Executive Board had proposed a program for an AWC Nurses Scholarship Fund and were heavily promoting it indicating there might have been a gap while focusing on war efforts.



1948 & 1951 - In 1948 the Club hopes to give a 'second scholarship' as well. By 1951 the AWC President wrote in her annual report that, "AWC has funded 14 philanthropic organization and youth groups, in addition to continuing our nurses' scholarship."

1960-70-80's - By the 1960's it seems that local public high schools became the focus; not nursing. Article after article and photos in the 1960's, 70's and 80's show four high school annual scholarships from AWC. With the rise of high schoolers attending college this shift of focus followed that trend.

For 40 years - By 1976 a notation stated that scholarships were to go to students in 'the arts field.' (This was at a time local schools were cutting art programs.) For 40 years, from 1976 through 2018, art was the basis of AWC scholarships. Our Philanthropy and Scholarship Luncheon showcased the recipients work so that many an April luncheon featured visual art from student portfolios and performance art from piano, violin, voice to dance interpretation.

ELEMENTS of ART



Dots
Line
Shape
Space
Texture
Form
Value
Color

1990 - Interestingly, there was a funding disruption in the late 1990's that caused consideration of dropping all scholarships. However, past AWC president Ruth Martin had passed and had willed a large enough donation to carry the scholarship program into the 21st century. She had been involved in AWC scholarship in an early scrapbook article and must have had a strong connection about this aspect of AWC to fund it years later.

By 2009 the Club began a scholarship for a single mother returning to school at Diablo Valley College. A recent recipient related her tough road quoted as saying "I hope to be an inspiration and an example for my son as I pursue my academic goals for a better life for him." Our current scholarship chair, Judy Tura, mentioned recently that DVC said AWC is the **only** group offering a scholarship for a returning, single parent.



2013 also saw expansion of our program to include foster emancipated students from Youth Homes, Inc. which was added as a philanthropy in 2011. The uncertainty of life in the foster system plus lack of familial role models (along with all the other issues these young people face) makes it hard for many to even consider advanced education beyond high school: though their life paths are difficult and challenging they are survivors motivated to succeed.

In 2018, AWC again shifted focus towards "needs based" scholarship. That change made a pivotal difference in the impact on each AWC scholarship recipient and is primary to their academic future. One recipient writes, "I am resilient, despite my background including bouts of homelessness and couch surfing." Our award came after receiving many letters of rejection and allowed her to fill the gap from her financial aid package for tuition and housing. She wrote, "It still makes me cry with joy." AWC's award will give her stability so she can attend college classes rather than look for her next place. Also, as she moved around a lot, she fell through many educational and counseling cracks resulting in up-and-down grades without guidance toward her personal goals. That is currently changing with new advocates and because of her stable living conditions, in just one semester she's listed on the Honor Roll!

The Alamo Women's Club Scholarship Program has changed focus many times but since 1943 has helped many students' future lives. What we should remember on Scholarship is:

1. AWC is committed to the program. It is long-standing and consistent, thus becoming one of our traditions, and
2. The Club has adapted its focus to the times and changing trends over its 103 years.

Vicki Koc, Historian, May 2019