

## Goals of the Carson Scholars Program

The purpose of the Carson Scholars Fund is to recognize and reward outstanding students in the United States enrolled in grades 4-11 who exemplify academic excellence and humanitarian qualities. Carson Scholars receive a \$1,000 scholarship invested towards a four-year college or university, an Olympic-sized medal and certificate, and an invitation to a regional recognition ceremony. Their schools receive a trophy (or nameplate) to be displayed.

The goal of the Carson Scholars Fund goes beyond instilling an interest in college early on and assisting with the costs of college:

**1. Carson Scholars are role models in their schools.** The impact of our program goes beyond individual students and families to schools, classrooms, and educational communities. Carson Scholars encourage other students to strive for excellence and serve as peer role models. Our scholarship program is available only to students in grades 4-11. These students have sufficient time to be recognized by their educators and peers, and to have the intended impact on their schools and educational communities. Our research shows that 94% of our scholars feel that being named a Carson Scholar has helped them become role models for other students.

**2. Carson Scholars are recognized by their school.** As part of the Carson Scholars Program, schools or educational communities are provided with a trophy to be displayed proudly in display cases. The aim is to add value to academic achievements and to refocus the spotlight on education; too often athletic achievements are recognized more than academic success. Carson Scholars are honored for their academics and motivated to continue to strive for excellence. Displaying a trophy in a prominent spot that is seen by the whole educational community promotes this goal.

Students enrolled in **accredited public or private schools** in the United States are eligible for our scholarship program. A school must involve a group of students and teachers meeting regularly in the same location, so that the recognition and role model components of our program can be fully realized.

Carson Scholars epitomize academic excellence. Schools are eligible to **nominate only one student** to apply to our scholarship program, ensuring that each nominee is a leader in their school. Carson Scholars must be **nominated by their school**, meet a minimum **GPA requirement of 3.75 on a 4.0 scale**, be **actively involved in community service activities**, and provide a teacher recommendation. In order to ensure fair scoring, an applicant's grades need to be comparable to those of other students through a district- or school-wide grading system. We ask that these grades be provided by an educator who has graded multiple students using a consistent set of standards during the same semester. These rules ensure a fair and accurate representation of an applicant's academic success in comparison to his/her peers. The nomination process is a key component of our program, it is important that this process is understood before selecting a nominee.

*Scholarships are awarded solely on the basis of academic achievement and humanitarian qualities, without regard to financial need or ethnicity.*

## Carson Scholars Recognition Program

The Carson Scholars Fund feels strongly that students should be **continually recognized for their achievements**. The Carson Scholars Recognition Program affirms the prestigious status of Carson Scholars in their pursuit of academic and career goals. This elite honor continues to recognize previous scholars who still meet the high expectations of Carson Scholars. The program is available to students in **grades 5-12** who have **previously been selected as a Carson Scholar and received a scholarship**. Scholars are honored with a special recognition package consisting of notification of their scholar status renewal, a commemorative pin to attach to the ribbon of their original medal, and a certificate of achievement. Schools or educational communities will continue to receive a trophy (or nameplate) to recognize the scholars who have been recognized through this program each year. More than 4,000 Carson Scholars have been recognized multiple times. **(There is no monetary award associated with scholar recognition.)**

### **Alternative Learning Environments**

Students who are homeschooled may also apply to our scholarship program. Homeschooled students must be nominated by a nationally recognized homeschool organization, a state-approved or recognized homeschool community or organization, or an independently verified (by an educational authority) cohort of homeschool students. It is the responsibility of the homeschool organization, community or cohort to provide evidence that they are nationally recognized, state-approved or recognized, or an independently verified by an educational authority.

Each homeschool organization, community or cohort is eligible to nominate only one student to apply for our scholarship program.

The nomination process is an important part of the program. The process takes a different form at different schools and within different homeschool communities. In a traditional school, it always includes a panel of educators (teachers, guidance counselors, and/or administrators) choosing among students that they all work with. In a homeschool community, it requires a national or state approved or recognized homeschool organization or community, or an independently verified cohort of homeschool students choosing among students whose work and leadership qualities they are familiar with. Each nominator must show that the nominee demonstrates leadership qualities, has been homeschooled in compliance with the law and regulations of the state in which the nominee is domiciled, and meets academic standards comparable to those applicable to traditionally-schooled nominees. The nominator is required to work with students other than the nominee to ensure a fair representation of the nominee's eligibility in comparison to his/her peers. The Carson Scholars Fund strives to achieve a fair comparison of all nominated students.

The ability of a homeschooled student to apply is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of the homeschool organization, community, or cohort to prove their eligibility.

**Scholarships are awarded solely on the basis of academic achievement and humanitarian qualities, without regard to financial need or ethnicity.**