



SEVEN OAKS  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

# Foundation

NEWS

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## Meet the Seven Oaks Education Foundation

*There's a lot going on behind the scholarship money*

Have you ever stopped to consider how scholarships, bursaries and awards are kept going?

Every year in the Seven Oaks School Division, nearly \$20,000 is given to students not just to recognize their efforts at school and in the community, but also to encourage them to pursue their personal and academic goals.

But we all know that money doesn't just appear – and it's the Seven Oaks Education Foundation that acts as custodian to the money that makes the many scholarships, bursaries and awards possible year after year.

### **The Foundation of the Seven Oaks Education Foundation**

The Seven Oaks Education Foundation is actually a relatively new organization, though it has deep roots in the Seven Oaks Community.

The forerunner to the Foundation was known as the Seven Oaks Scholarship Board. The Board was originally established in the 1940s by members of the West Kildonan community with the goal of raising money and providing scholarships specifically for West Kildonan's high school students. As time went on, the Board expanded its scope to include Garden City Collegiate and Maples Collegiate as well.

Ed Johns began working for the Seven Oaks School Division in the Secretary



Treasurer's Department in the 1970s, and assisted Glenn Hansen (the Secretary Treasurer of the Seven Oaks Scholarship Board) until taking over in late 90s. He remembers how the Board began to face greater challenges over time.

"The Scholarship Board did quite a bit to raise money and keep scholarships going," recalls Johns. "But over time, a lot of community members got older and the Board membership kept shrinking. Eventually, in the 1990s, it was really down to Ben Zaidman (Chairman), Glenn Hansen (Treasurer), High School Principals and myself."

Membership in the Scholarship Board wasn't the only problem. Many of the scholarships at the time were dependent on people donating the same amount of money year after year and as many of those donors grew older, fewer donations were being made. In addition, fluctuations in interest rates throughout the 80s dramatically impacted the investments that were sustaining many existing scholarships.

"The Scholarship Board just didn't have the members to effectively address the problem," says Johns. "One or two people can't do the work of 15 or 16 people."

Johns recalls that it was Ben Zaidman who asked the Seven Oaks School Board for assistance in establishing a new education foundation to take over the work of the Seven Oaks Scholarship Board. The School Board established a committee of three trustees, a superintendent and the secretary treasurer to establish what is now known as the Seven Oaks Education Foundation, incorporated in 2001.

Today the education foundation has grown and includes many representatives from the community which maintains its sustainability

### **Building on a New Foundation**

Today's Seven Oaks Education Foundation respects the roots that were at the heart of the Scholarship Board.

The Foundation's Board consists of volunteers who have a passion for education and a strong desire to see students succeed. Many scholarships that existed under the Scholarship Board banner still bear the names of the people who so generously created and supported them throughout the years. Memorial scholarships established by family members who share a loved one's belief in education have been maintained.

But the Foundation has also taken a stronger role in raising and managing money to ensure the sustainability of scholarships, bursaries and awards. The Foundation works with alumni from Seven Oaks high schools to raise money during reunion events. The Foundation itself holds an annual fundraiser which brings in several thousand dollars each year. This is in addition to raising awareness of the scholarships and awards among the community, asking for donations while encouraging students to apply.

Some of the money donated goes into a general fund while some goes to the Winnipeg Foundation (as well as other financial institutions) for investment.

The interest from those investments is enough to pay for numerous scholarships and bursaries without ever touching the principal amount, enabling them to continue each year.

The investments have been paying off in other ways as well. For example, the Foundation was able to raise the amounts of several scholarships and awards from the \$50 and \$100 mark to \$200 and \$300 amounts. For some students, that may mean being able to afford an extra class or textbook.

Perhaps the most notable accomplishment of the Seven Oaks Education Foundation is that it has reached a point where it can actually create new scholarships to address new and emerging areas of interest.

In the past few years, several new scholarships have been created by the Seven Oaks Foundation Board:

- **Creative Arts Scholarship:** awarded to a student who has been actively involved in the Performing Arts during his/her high school experience and is pursuing post-secondary education.
- **Technology Scholarship:** presented to a student who exhibits a keen interest, a general proficiency in computer and technology related subject areas, as well as pursuing post secondary education in a technology line of study.
- **Campus Life Scholarship:** awarded to a graduating student who has met life's adversities and challenges with dignity and determination. The scholarship provides an opportunity for this deserving individual to partake in a post-secondary experience at the University of Manitoba.

- **Early Childhood Education Fund:** Currently in development, this new scholarship will enable students to get an education degree and become teachers or day care workers.

"What we do is try to look at what is covered and the kinds of scholarships that are awarded every year," says Pat Stefanchuk, member of the Foundation's Board of Directors. "We look at an area that hasn't been addressed, and see if we can do something to change that."

"We don't want it to be just about academics and high marks. We exist to encourage high personal standards as well, so we want to be as broad as possible to recognize various talents and areas of interest."

"I think that's the most gratifying part," says Johns. "You put in all this work and at first it's just maintenance. Then all of a sudden, you've raised money and have enough to start coming up with new scholarships that can help more kids in the future."

***For more information on how you can donate to the Seven Oaks Education Foundation or volunteer to help, visit [www.7oaks.org](http://www.7oaks.org).***

