Bonner Scholars

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One of WKU’s newest scholarship opportunities is geared at students with an eye toward community service.

Amy Bingham has more on Bonner scholarships in this week’s View from the Hill.

There are more than 300 non-profit agencies in Bowling Green alone so there’s no shortage of ways students can give back to the community. And the Bonner Leadership Scholar program can help them pay for college in return.

For the past year, WKU Senior Jillian Weston has been helping refugee families like this one.

“I’ve helped them with Medicaid and reading the mail and the dad, Booray, is trying to get his drivers license.”

It’s volunteer work she began as part of a cultural diversity class but it made her a perfect candidate for a Bonner scholarship.

“You have to have a financial need and a good GPA. I came down on a list of having both.”

A new batch of Bonner Scholars is now being sought. With Jill on hand, Alive Center staff members recently met with potential scholars to discuss the program.

“They travel abroad locally, nationally and they’re really a part of a national network of Bonners that make them feel part of something huge.”

All because of the generosity of a couple named Bertram and Corella Bonner.

“The couple that started the foundation had the financial means to do something significant. They were actually debating on whether to buy a baseball team or start a foundation.”

Students like Jill are sure glad they chose a foundation. Her tuition is fully covered in exchange for ten hours of community service per week.

“We do reflection meetings every other Friday and it’s a time when you get to figure out what you’ve learned.”

Learning and lending a helping hand along the way.

“I like being able to network throughout the community to different kinds of people and people with different goals and a different outlook on the American way of life.”

There are currently three Bonner Scholars in it’s inaugural year at WKU but that number will grow to ten next year. Applications are due May first and can be found at wku.edu backslash alive. With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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