November 25, 2015

Hello,

We are excited to learn that you have applied to Earlham College and want to inform you about the scholarships available through Earlham’s Bonner Scholars Program. Earlham has a rich history of engaging students in service and social issues. The Bonner Scholars Program is a vehicle by which students continue that legacy and dedicate themselves not only to service but also to making connections between their community experiences and their academic pursuits. On behalf of the Bonner Scholars Program, we would like to invite you to consider applying for this exceptional service learning scholarship. The application deadline is February 15.

The Bonner Scholars Program was created to assist students with passion for community service and leadership development who have high financial need to obtain a college education. We recognize that circumstances may have prevented some students from participating in community service so past service experience is not a requirement. Rather, students must possess a genuine desire to engage in community service and relevant learning and reflection meetings and a willingness to devote the time and energy needed to be successful in the program.

Bonner Scholars will receive a total of $2,500 during each academic year contingent upon successful completion of school-year community service requirements as described below. Bonner Scholars also participate in two summer service placements at nonprofit organizations of their choice anywhere in the U.S. or abroad. During each summer, Scholars receive up to $1,000 for summer living expenses and an earnings stipend of $1,500 upon completion of 280 hours of summer service. Upon four years of successful completion of the Bonner Program, the Bonner Foundation awards $2,000 toward student loan reduction or graduate school tuition. **Bonner Scholars will receive a financial aid package from Earlham that meets the total verified financial need of the Bonner Scholar which means that some students may receive additional aid that the college would not otherwise offer them.**

The Bonner Scholarship provides financial support for those admitted students who demonstrate financial need and a commitment to service. Eligible candidates must have an expected family contribution (EFC) on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) of $12,000 or less in order to be considered. This year’s Bonner Scholars had an average expected family contribution of $3,462.

Earlham College is one of more than two dozen colleges and universities nation-wide honored to host a Bonner Scholars Program. Each year, 15 incoming first-year students are selected to participate in the four-year scholarship program. The current application cycle, which this letter is inviting you to consider, is the only time you will have the opportunity to become a Bonner Scholar unless a Bonner Scholar later leaves the program at which time eligible students will be invited to apply to fill the opening.

Bonner Scholars commit to complete an average of 10 hours of service a week (140 hours per semester) during the academic year. These hours are made up mainly of time spent serving at a community agency chosen by the Scholar from among many service sites addressing education, youth development, the environment, support for elders and people
with disabilities and more. Bonner Scholars are also required to devote some of their hours to activities such as in-service workshops, training sessions, and retreats that address pertinent issues and teach valuable, transferable skills. First year Bonner Scholars participate in a special orientation just prior to Earlham’s new student orientation and a weekly seminar during the fall semester. They subsequently participate in regularly scheduled Bonner meetings and activities which are designed to equip students to assume increasing levels of responsibility and leadership within their service. Participation in the Bonner Scholars program is much more than simply completing the required number of service hours. Bonner Scholars commit to become part of a community and to strive to develop their expertise and leadership during their four years of participation in the program.

To apply for the Bonner Scholars Program, you must complete an application which includes eight short answer questions, have someone familiar with your service or other relevant activities submit a recommendation for you and complete and submit the FAFSA. The deadline for receiving all applications, recommendations and the FAFSA is February 15. All materials are submitted via online forms. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the application questions and instructions for how to get information sent to the person writing your letter of recommendation. Links to the online forms can be accessed at http://www.earlham.edu/bonner

We will notify students who have been selected for the scholarship by early March. Shortly thereafter, recipients will receive a financial aid package reflecting the Bonner Scholarship and any other additional aid to meet the student's total verified financial need.

As you consider whether or not you wish to apply to the Bonner Scholars Program, keep in mind that there are other avenues open to Earlham students with a passion for service. Earlham’s Center for Integrated Learning will be glad to assist any student to find service opportunities that match his or her interests and availability. The Center for Integrated Learning is an Earlham initiative to infuse experiential learning across the liberal arts.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact us by emailing bonner@earlham.edu or calling (765) 983-1893 or toll free at 800-EARLHAM. We hope you will consider joining us as we work together, “Changing the World through Service.”

Sincerely,

Jana Schroeder
Director of Community Engagement and
Associate Director, Center for Integrated Learning