

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

"Charity Awards Sixteen Scholarships to Pacific Islanders"

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Students in the small Central Pacific nation of Micronesia face many challenges on their path to college.

Public schools in Micronesia, which receive support from the United States government, are often under-resourced. Many struggle with staffing problems. Only a small number of families can afford the modest tuition charged by the handful of missionary and nonprofit private schools operating in the islands.

The financial and logistical obstacles are particularly high for students who live in the isolated "outer islands" located far beyond the reef of the state capitals.

Many of these low-lying coral Atolls are thousands of miles away from a major port of call. They all lack regular power and indoor plumbing. Most of the islanders there still engage in subsistence farming and fishing. For parents in the outer islands, sending their children to a nationally competitive independent school is just a dream.

That's where "Habele" enters the picture.

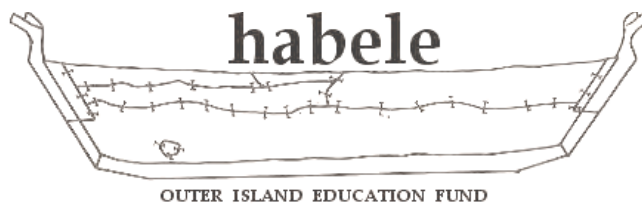
The word Habele is Ulithian term meaning to wish for and realize a future. It is a compound of the words "to be" and "to make."

The Habele Outer Island Education Fund is an all-volunteer, US-based, nonprofit organization that works to promote academic attainment and opportunities for outer islands students. It hopes to give Outer Island students a hand as they ascend from primary and secondary school onto college.

Habele works with local educators and traditional leaders to build libraries, provide school supplies, and issue tuition scholarships for deserving students to attend prestigious private schools on the more populated "high islands" that serve as Micronesia's state capitals.

This year Habele has awarded over \$7,500.00 in scholarships, paying the major part of tuition for sixteen of the outer island's most ambitious young scholars.

Tuition scholarships were awarded to students from the islands of Kutu, Ta, and Lekinioch in Chuuk State, and from Ulithi, Woleai, Ifaluk, Eauripik, Satawal, and Fais in Yap State. Parents of the students have committed to paying transportation and other fees, as well as to provide Habele with report cards and progress reports. Checks were mailed directly to schools in Yap, Chuuk, and Pohnpei.



David Reside, a former US Peace Corps official in Micronesia, has praised the work of Habele, noting that “it is particularly important that there be opportunities for those students who show great promise but are at a great disadvantage in accessing continued education.”

Two former Habele scholarship winners are now enrolled at the College of Micronesia, Yap Campus.

The average Habele scholarship for 2009-10 was just under \$500.00. The awards were funded by the gifts of seventeen individual donors and two corporations, representing states from across the United States.

Habele is an IRS recognized, not-for-profit corporation, headquartered in Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina has a special connection with Micronesia thanks to the work of Palmetto State native Jim Boykin, who spearheaded the establishment of an outer island school district during the 1960s.

For more information about how you can support a student or provide school materials to outer island Micronesian classrooms visit www.habele.org.

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