



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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K-12 Scholarships Awarded to Micronesian Students

Twenty-four students from throughout Micronesia will be awarded K–12 tuition scholarships for the 2011–12 school year.

Habele, a US-based charity, will make the announcement early Monday morning. The group supports students in Micronesia through tuition scholarships as well as donations to public schools and libraries.

The 2011–2012 scholarships winners include students from Eauripik, Fais, Ifaluk, Lamotrek, Ulithi, Woleai and Stawal in Yap State as well as Kuttu in Chuuk State. They will be attending the SDA schools in Yap and Pohnpei, Saint Mary's School on Yap, Yap Catholic High School, Berea Christian High School in Chuuk, the Pohnpei Catholic School and Saramen Chuuk Academy.

Habele received over sixty applications for the 2011–12 tuition scholarships from across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau. The scholarships cover an average of 70 percent of a student's tuition at a private, or "independent," school. Individual and corporate donors in the United States provided the money.

"We believe that each child is unique. No one classroom is appropriate for all students," explained **Neil Mellen**, a Habele Board Member. Mellen also pointed out that the scholarship program led to smaller class sizes in the public schools as well as cost savings for both the US and Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) governments.

According to the FSM Government, 49 percent of adults over the age of 25 in Micronesia are not high school graduates. Among those enrolling in the College of Micronesia (COM) only ten percent obtain an associate's degree within three years.

Habele was established in 2006 as a "modest first step" in addressing those issues, says **Alex Sidles**, another Habele board member. "We wanted to –and are still working to– raise parental engagement and expectations. Instruction needs to be dynamic and student-appropriate."

Since that time Habele has provided thousands of reading and textbooks to isolated classrooms throughout the Outer and Lagoon Islands of Yap and Chuuk States. Most recently the all-volunteer group sent 29 boxes of K-5 reading, math and science books to public schools in the Outer Islands of Yap. The donation came through a partnership with Woodland Hills Elementary School in California.

The tuition scholarship winners provide Habele with photos, letters and copies of their report cards throughout the school year. The schools they attend also keep Habele informed of the student's progress in the classroom. "It's a real partnership and we're proud of that," says Sidles.

The announcement included Habele's introduction of the **Leona Peterson** (1926–2011) Memorial K–12 Scholarship. A native of Waterloo, Iowa, Peterson led the Department of Aging in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) during the late 1970s and early 80s.

Learn more about Habele on the web at www.habele.org or through their "Habele Fund" Facebook page. ##