

Low-income families get \$750K in scholarships for private school

By Sarah Womer @YSSarahWomer | Posted: Monday, April 7, 2014 9:57 pm

Thanks to a partnership between the Arizona Leadership Foundation and Western Refining, \$750,000 is being diverted to students from low-income families in Yuma in the form of scholarships to local private schools.

A company that operates refineries as well as convenience stores and gas stations in the Southwest, Western Refining is partnering with the Arizona Leadership Foundation to participate in the state's corporate tax credit program.

To celebrate the donation as well as Yuma's Centennial, the Arizona Leadership Foundation, who will distribute the scholarships to families, will be hosting a birthday party with cake and prizes for the community from 3 to 5:30 p.m. April 10 at Giant Gas, 2381 S. Avenue B. Also as part of the event, Mayor Doug Nicholls will join the Arizona Leadership Foundation in hosting a free car wash to celebrate Yuma students.

Aaron Muth, president of Arizona Leadership Foundation, encouraged families to come and find out what private school scholarship opportunities are available through their organization.

Muth said that although some Yuma students have benefited from their scholarships in the past, historically Yuma hasn't seen the larger volume of tax credits that exist in larger cities in Arizona.

"We're trying to make a more dedicated effort to make sure families in Yuma have the options that they do in Pima and Maricopa counties," he said.

"We have great public schools in Yuma and great charter schools in Yuma, but this is just an opportunity for people who many have not had an opportunity to look into this in the past."

He said that parents of students who are in preschool all the way up through high school that are interested in exploring private school options in Yuma can find out more information at the upcoming event, as representatives from various local campuses will be present. Applications for the scholarship are based on household incomes and student merit.

Currently \$375,000 of the total amount donated for the 2014-2015 school year has already been distributed in the community by the Arizona Leadership Foundation.

"None of this would have been possible without the generous support of Western Refinancing," Muth said.

Gary Hanson, vice president of corporate communications at Western Refining, explained that the

company wanted to make the donation after recently expanding its business to the Yuma area.

“We want to be a good neighbor and give back to our communities and make those a better place than what we found them, if you will,” Hanson said.

He said that Western Refining’s goal is to provide assistance so that young people in the community can receive an education of their choosing.

“They’re the future leaders of our state and our communities and the more that we can help in their education, that’s great for everyone,” he said.

“We’re so proud and happy to be a part of the Yuma community now and this is one small way we feel like we could make a contribution that will benefit a lot of people, and most importantly the young people of Yuma. It’s our honor to participate in a program that can do that.”

Visit www.arizonaleader.org for more information about the scholarship offerings.