



JUST ASKING

BY MARY KLEST

What resources are available for students seeking college scholarships?

I asked Melanie Coffman, college adviser and counselor at Barrington High School, and Julie Kerr, guidance resource coordinator.

HOWEVER WELL STUDENTS achieve, they are going to need financial help to get through college. It's not like it was years ago, when ambitious students found jobs and took out loans to pay their own way. The loans are not available to cover the escalating cost of attending four-year colleges.

Last year, 25 percent of BHS graduating seniors reported receiving merit-based scholarships. Types of scholarships are vast, including those set up by local organizations (see the BHS Web site for a list). Some of the staff members guiding students and their families through the numerous options available are Melanie Coffman, Laura Beacom, and Julie Kerr.

The first step they suggest for parents with children not yet in high school is to visit the Web site www.finaid.org. "It's the best site to begin with," Coffman said. "Use the calculators to see projected college costs, then determine how much you'll need to save."

Kerr introduces resources available to students during their junior year. "I post information about when scholarship applications are due and any major criteria required." Many good books on obtaining scholarships with descriptions of colleges and universities line the shelves at the school's Guidance Resource Center.

PHOTO: MARY KLEST



JULIE KERR (LEFT) AND MELANIE COFFMAN (RIGHT) AT BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE RESOURCE CENTER

Another Web site they recommend is www.fastweb.com. Once students fill out a profile, they will receive information on scholarship offerings via e-mail. The search process requires commitment. In addition to researching all the options, students may need to write an essay or set up interviews. Parents often get involved to help their busy seniors.

"I had a boy come in and say he didn't want his parents to pay a dime for his education. I told him he could look at colleges where he might get a large scholarship or go to Harper," Coffman said. She had good things to say about this alternative for some students. "We love Harper College. It's a good choice for students who want to save money, who like being home, or want a do-over because their grades weren't so good in high school." In fact, 21 percent of last year's seniors chose to attend two-year colleges. Coffman said most students want to enjoy the independence of being away at college. For those receiving scholarships, freedom from a mountain of debt is also a good feeling.

Visit Our Showroom
Furniture, Accessories,
Custom Cabinets, Kitchen/Bath
Theater, Design Documents

Award Winning Interiors for 27 years

Adele Lampert ASID
SAVE \$2000 on KITCHEN / BATH
cabinets \$10000 or more
320 E Main St. Barrington IL 60010
847-382-1001
M-Thurs 9 to 5 Fri 9 to 4 Sat 10 to 1
interiorspageone.com

CYPRESS TURNS ORDINARY INTO EXTRAORDINARY

CYPRESS BUILDERS, INC
702 SOUTH VERMONT SUITE 300
PALATINE, ILLINOIS 60067
847-963-2303
FAX: 847-963-2304
EMAIL: cypressb@sbcglobal.net

