



Bedford Minuteman Scholarship Fund

2 Macintosh Road, Bedford Massachusetts, 01730 USA

3 January 2018

Re: Press Release

In 1986 the first award for scholarship was given. The program began the year before as a means of honoring the memory of Bedford Minuteman Company member Al Puzzo, the perennial flag carrier (Cornet) of the Company in countless parades and community functions. To manage the operation apart from the business of the Bedford Minuteman Company, a spin-off organization was created with a separate Board of Directors and was led by John Filios, former Captain of the Company and former Bedford Citizen of the Year, who served as President of the new Bedford Minuteman Memorial Scholarship Trust. Needing a means of funding our endeavors, we settled on the annual sale of Christmas Eve Luminaries. One member, Ed Magiera, had experience with the process and it then became the primary source of the funds that would be awarded to further the scholarship of Bedford students. Since 1986, more than \$70,000.00 has been awarded.

The efforts of the Board of Directors begin to increase as the holiday season nears. Sand is ordered and bagged; 15-hour votive candles are ordered and stacked; white bags are ordered and grouped with the candles, and then the sand, candles, bags and instructions are put together for distribution. Sales of the luminary kits are primarily accomplished through word-of-mouth from annual supporters and a number of individuals who want to expand the Christmas Eve lighting effect in their neighborhoods. The illumination of the town center and Wilson Park are through the efforts of members of the Board of Directors and some supportive friends. Distribution to the community in general has been provided through the generous support and collaboration of Chip-In Farm who have been instrumental in helping with sales for many years. It remains that these sales fund the scholarship efforts of the organization.

Since 1986, Fifty individual scholarship awards have been given to Bedford students who have written an application essay on the topic of what the history of Bedford has meant to them as they have grown through the educational system. This past year the Board of Directors have undertaken an additional approach to honoring scholarship. After meeting with Bedford Public Schools administrators, department heads, and librarians, the Board of Directors have decided to provide special awards for Bedford's youth in regard to our colonial and historical heritage by focusing an annual award to the high school, middle school, and elementary libraries. In this age of budget cuts that strike at updated library resources, our financial support would reach many, many more of Bedford's students than the fifty individuals over the last 31 years. Our goal is to augment the libraries. The

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and has thus awarded over \$70,000.00*



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restriction to our support would be that the funds would go exclusively to resources for American studies (local, state, and national history and literature) and that our organization would be given an annual list of the procured resources for our records.

The support of the community of Bedford in buying the annual Christmas Eve luminaries is making a difference in the education of our youth. The Board of Directors is proud that we are able to award a \$3,000.00 grant to the elementary school libraries this year and we look forward to making this award an annual benefit to the libraries of Bedford Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Ciaccia, President of the Bedford Minuteman Memorial Scholarship Trust
Calvin L. Carpenter, Treasurer
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