

DAV expands, enhances scholarship offerings

BY BRIAN BUCKWALTER



Student volunteers can now earn up to \$30,000 in money for higher learning

DAV is expanding its scholarship program to offer more opportunities—and more money—for its youth volunteers pursuing higher learning.

The DAV Scholarships Program expanded the number of scholarships it offers and the amount top recipients will receive. Available funds per year grew by \$35,000. First- and second-place awards increased, with the top award now \$30,000.

National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst said the changes speak to the value DAV places on student volunteerism that helps veterans.

“We want to give young people every incentive to support and build relationships with America’s veterans,” said Kleindienst. “By increasing our already robust scholarship offerings, we hope to see more future leaders participating and do more to help them achieve their educational goals.”

Kleindienst said DAV has streamlined the scholarship application process and widened its eligibility criteria. Volunteers 21 years old and younger can complete the entire application online, including its 750- to 1,000-word essay. Students can accumulate the required 100 DAV-credited volunteer hours over a lifetime instead of just a calendar year. Also, DAV will now accept applications from the beginning of April through the end of February.

Students, even those already pursuing higher education, have a wide range of options to meet the volunteer-hour requirement, such as volunteering at a VA hospital, assisting veterans around their homes, or helping maintain a community veterans memorial.

“Really, the only obstacle is your imagination,” said Kleindienst. “Anything that can be done for the good of veterans. And if they’re giving those hours on behalf of DAV, we want to find a way to honor that.”

Local DAV chapters have volunteer coordinators who can assist with properly crediting students' hours. Recipients of DAV scholarships can use the money toward any accredited college, technical school, or trade school program.

DAV's scholarship program originated in 2007 and, despite the pandemic, saw its highest number of nominations ever in 2020. Kleindienst said he's excited to see more applications come across his desk and for the program's expansion.

"To be able to reward a young man or woman for giving us their most precious commodity is the most rewarding thing in the world," he said.

Read more at www.davscholarships.org.