

What's a Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation Add-on?

At a dinner party just after Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation (RSF) trustees had interviewed over one hundred applicants in late February, RSF trustee Sherrie Hansen told guests the story of Ygnacio Valley High School (YVHS) senior Adila Amini. After evacuations were announced on the fifth day of the Taliban's 2021 takeover of Afghanistan, Hansen said, Amini's mother managed to get herself and daughters to the Kabul airport.

While waiting in line, however, Amini fainted, and in the confusion that followed, U.S. soldiers separated her from her family and placed her on a plane. She landed in the U.S. not knowing whether anyone in her family made it out (they did not), not knowing English, or anyone in the country. Eventually, a supportive local Concord foster home helped her enroll at YVHS and, Hansen added, just that month refugee agencies had managed to bring her sisters and mother to Concord.

After listening carefully to the story, Diane Hinds turned to RSF Development Chair Wayne Wiegand to ask about categories of giving. Her interest perked when he discussed "add-ons." To be considered for an add-on scholarship, students first have to be awarded a Rossmoor Scholarship, then meet special requirements for an additional stipend of \$2,500, making the total award \$6,000. Days later Hinds told Wiegand: "I want to donate \$2,500 for an add-on next year to be given to an RSF awardee who is a single parent." Because Wiegand had been friends with Hinds for more than a decade he suggested the add-on be named for her and her deceased husband. She liked the suggestion.

The practice of donating add-ons began in 2006 when Sylvia Kaplan's family gave RSF a generous donation as a memorial for their mother, who had served as an RSF trustee for some years. Because Kaplan had been very active in community service Kaplan's family requested that the money used for add-ons to be given to students active in community service. The donation funds two add-on awards per year.

In 2012 former RSF trustee Betty Hagstrom began annually funding two add-on awards for high school students who intend to pursue a career in the medical field; she named the awards after her late husband Calvin. For this year's competition she donated a third. Since 2012 she has funded seventeen add-ons. Hagstrom and her two daughters read all the essays submitted for the Calvin Hagstrom Family Trust Awards and at the spring RSF Awards ceremony meet the students receiving them. She turned 100 years old on October 29. In a recent phone conversation with Wiegand she concluded by saying, "Talk to you soon ... or maybe not."

In 2017 the daughters of former RSF trustee Eleana Peratis initiated The Eleana Peratis Woman in STEM Award given to a woman interested in science, technology, engineering, or math. Two years later RSF trustee Lois La Shell honored her mother by initiating The Eleanor Knapp Single Mother's Award, which is given to a single mother attending Diablo Valley College. In 2024 she donated three.

Other add-ons include three Walsh/Ledin Instrumental Music Awards, the Linda Ledgerwood Employed Student Award, the Social Justice Award, and the Miller Family Single Mother Award Add-ons donated by Rossmoor clubs (the Computer Club and the Chinese American Association were identified in the October 30, 2024, issue of the News). For 2025, RSF will be able to offer sixteen add-ons, including the "Ralph and Diane Hinds Single Parent Add-on Award."

Submitted by: Wayne A. Wiegand, Trustee