It’s about providing an opportunity. And the Frontiers International Springfield Club is committed to doing just that for area young men.

Toward that goal, the Club recently established the **Frontiers $1K Scholarship Fund** through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. The fund will provide a $1,000 scholarship to African American males who complete the required seven years of involvement in the Club’s Positive Youth Development (PYD) program and Junior Frontiers program and graduate from high school. The scholarship can be used by the students to attend college or a vocational school.

“We’re very excited. We’re hoping it will be incentive to kids and an incentive to parents to get involved in the program,” Frontiers International Springfield Club President James Boykin said. “We hope this helps to let them know that there is this opportunity out there.”

Receiving the scholarship will require dedication, beginning before the students become teenagers. The Positive Youth Development program is for students in sixth through eighth grade with the Junior Frontier program lasting from ninth through 12th grade. The Positive Youth Development Program focuses on helping students improve their decision making, leadership skills, self esteem and academic achievement. The program began in 1991 and the Frontiers Club reserved 20 spots for sixth graders interested in beginning the process for the $1K scholarship. Currently, 12 sixth graders have registered. There are a total of 30 students in the PYD club, but only the current sixth graders will be eligible for the $1K scholarship. A new batch of sixth graders will be eligible to begin the process each year.

“It will be a mixture of students. We’re hoping the combination of people from various economic status will be good for all involved,” Boykin said.

The Junior Frontiers program began in 1995 and has almost 40 students involved.

“We started the Junior Frontiers so that we could keep in contact with them and keep giving them that positive reinforcement,” Boykin said.

The local club was inspired to expand its program after learning of a similar fund started by Jennifer Wilfong in Peoria. The Community Foundation invited Wilfong to speak before a group of organizations in the spring. Boykin, Doug King and Don Tracy attended the event on behalf of the Frontiers club and the message was openly received.

“It got us excited that we could do something like that,” Boykin said.

The club also understands it’s a challenging process. The process has already begun for ensuring that funds will be available when the students are eligible for the scholarship. Donations are being accepted in a variety of forms and the club already has a commitment from 15 members to pledge $150 for seven years in order to help endow the fund.

“We’re making a commitment,” Boykin said. “If we get 20 students and all stay that is $20,000. We have a big task ahead to get this money in place.”