It’s a great day to be a Pawnee Indian

A community college or a university or a trade school. Whatever the path a student from Pawnee High School chooses, there is assistance because of the Pawnee Community Education Foundation.

Making sure that assistance will be there in the future was further solidified by the recent establishment of the Pawnee Community Education Foundation Fund through the Community Foundation for Land of Lincoln.

“We look at it as a win/win for us and them,” PCEF President Jay Sheedy said. “(The Community Foundation) has a great reputation of service in the Sangamon County area and excellent work with non-profits like us.”

The Pawnee Community Education Foundation began awarding scholarships in 1999. Since the first day, it has delivered $202,000 in scholarships to 434 students.

PCEF manages nine different types of scholarships covering a variety of interests and amounts. Seven of the nine funds are individual endowments focused on specific criteria. On average between 25 to 35 scholarships are given each year with a high of 52 scholarships in 2008. The diversity and number of scholarships provides benefits to the vast majority of Pawnee students wanting to extend their education.

“With the expense of college today higher than ever, whether you go to a community college or a university, any and every dollar helps,” Sheedy said. “The goal is to award as many as we can.”

Each scholarship is a one-time award, so more students benefit through the years.

The Foundation is a 13-member board of Pawnee alumni and longtime residents all striving to provide opportunities to the current students. PCEF raises funds through donations, bequeaths and fundraisers.

“Our mission is to raise money for scholarships. That's our only mission. That's where our funding is devoted,” Sheedy said.

Part of the allure of establishing the Fund with the Community Foundation is the Foundation’s ability to manage funds to the maximum revenue potential.
“What we wanted to do was diversify our portfolio,” Sheedy said.

For more information on or donate to the Fund contact the Community Foundation at 217/789-4431.