That’s the motto of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. For the Springfield-Decatur Area Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, the second part of the motto takes form in a scholarship program to assist area students attending college.

“Scholarship is a very important piece,” chapter president Jeanette Goza said. “It’s ingrained in us. It’s what we do. Education is the only thing they can’t take from you. ... It’s very important to get education. We all know there is a need for financial assistance. Even for those that might be well off, there are always needs that come up.”
In an effort to continue to grow the long-standing scholarship program, the chapter recently established the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Scholarship Fund at the Community Foundation.

“We thought the Community Foundation would be a great place to build and administer the fund,” chapter historian Yvonne Singley said.

“The Community Foundation cooperates with us and treats us well.”

The local chapter began in 1976 with 18 charter members. Many of the members were educators, and the group focused on helping students achieve greater educational opportunities.

Currently, there are 97 members in the Springfield and Decatur area. The scholarships are available to African-American students graduating high school in Sangamon and Macon counties.

The scholarship committee doesn’t focus solely on one aspect, but looks at the greater picture of the students and their possibilities.

“We have gone about and tried to help those who may not be straight As or may have not been overly involved, but have potential,” Goza said.

“Scholarship is assistance. It’s that extra boost to get someone help.”

Goza herself was a scholarship recipient in 1983. The award helped her attend Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she received her bachelor’s degree.

Now she’s helping other future leaders. The chapter holds a variety of fundraisers to support the fund. There is a pre-Kwanzaa event held each November and a La Petite event, which highlights eighth grade girls transitioning into high school.

Since its beginning, the chapter has provided more than 400 students with scholarships totaling more than $200,000.

“We’ve made a significant contribution, but we would like to build on that,” Singley said.

For more information on how to donate to the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Scholarship Fund, please contact the Community Foundation at 217.789.4431 or visit CFLL.org.