

Envision donation keeps Best & Brightest going



Best & Brightest Awards coordinator Laura Rogers holds a check with Darryl Worrell, CEO of Envision Credit Union on October 3, 2012. / Michael Schwarz/Special to the Democrat

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Standing in front of principals and guidance counselors of public and private Tallahassee schools, Darryl Worrell, president and CEO of Envision Credit Union, donated a check for \$175,000 on Wednesday to the Best and Brightest Awards program.

The check will ensure the presence of the Best and Brightest Awards program through 2017. The program awards Tallahassee area high school seniors and eighth-grade students with scholarships.

Worrell said the program is a “homegrown opportunity to develop kids and make them a part of the fabric of the community.”

“The Best and Brightest Awards program has now become the premier local scholarship that local Leon County students strive for,” said Laura Rogers, the program director of World Class Schools, which runs the program.

The program awards scholarships to the top three Leon County students in 15 categories including art, science and music. Teachers and principals are encouraged to seek out students for the awards, which are given out based on an application and interview process. Judges weigh 50 percent of their decision on the student’s community involvement.

There have been more than 900 winners of the Best and Brightest Award over the past seven years, with more than \$300,000 in scholarship money given out. In the program’s inaugural year, 81 students were given scholarships. There were 147 scholarships awarded last year.

“What it means is that for the next five years for sure this program continues to recognize, honor and award the best and brightest students in this community,” said Ron Sachs, president and CEO of Ron Sachs Communications.

“Those young leaders whose commitment to service, school and community probably foretell a terrific future for this community, state and country,” Sachs said.

An eighth-grade essay contest was added two years ago. That contest awards the students with the top three essays from each school.

“It’s now a powerful statement to be able to say ‘I’m a Best and Brightest winner,’ ” Rogers said.