



PRESS RELEASE

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Foundation Funds Duke TIP, Education Investments

The Polk County Community Foundation is pleased to announce that full scholarships will be available for qualifying students in Polk County and Landrum to attend Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) Summer Studies camps in 2018 and 2019. Interested students must be in the seventh or ninth grade in 2018 and 2019 to be eligible for a merit scholarship to attend Summer Studies camps in those years. The Foundation has not secured funding for merit scholarships in 2020 or subsequent years, but is actively pursuing all opportunities to continue this extraordinary program.

Duke TIP is dedicated to serving academically talented students by working with students, families, and educators to identify and help students reach their highest potential. Duke TIP students are invited to take either the SAT or the ACT college entrance exams as seventh graders and those with qualifying scores may apply for the Summer Studies Program. These three-week camps occur on college campuses across North Carolina and Georgia and allow students to take part in interactive, inquiry-based courses that are equivalent to semester-long college courses.

Beginning in 2013, the Foundation's Board of Directors voted to approve a three-year pilot program to completely fund local middle and high school students' attendance at Duke TIP Summer Studies camps. Five years later, more than 125 full scholarships have been awarded to students in Polk County and Landrum who qualified for Duke TIP's Summer Studies Programs and student interest continues to grow.

Students and their families have overwhelmingly reported that the intellectual and social growth Duke TIP provided was a positive force in their lives, with students characterizing the experience as the "highlight" of their summer and "life-changing." Students have also stated that this program boosted their confidence, bringing some out of their shell by providing an environment in which they better fit in socially. Parents have also noted the positive influence of this program, including one parent who stated that her child came back from the experience more self-assured, and that it created positive ripple effects in her entire family.

In addition to supporting Duke TIP scholarships, the Foundation provides a variety of funding for other educational programs, including support for:

- Polk County Schools Summer Seminar camps where local teachers lead week-long seminars for local students at no cost.

- Professional development trainings and conferences for local teachers and school guidance counselors.
- Student intern programs at local nonprofit organizations and at the Polk County High School Farm.
- A college advisor at Polk County High School and Early College.
- The band program at Polk County High School so all students may play in the band, regardless of their ability to pay for this extracurricular activity.
- Artist-in-residence programs at O.P. Earle Elementary and Landrum Middle schools, which culminate in “Kessler Cultural Evening” community receptions.

By providing funding for these programs and many others, the Foundation seeks to enrich the lives of all local students, their families, and the community.

The Foundation is dedicated to advancing philanthropy and improving the quality of life for all citizens in our community through the generous support of donors. For more information about scholarship donor opportunities, including for Duke TIP merit scholarships in 2020 or subsequent years, or other charitable giving options, please contact Elizabeth Nager at the Polk County Community Foundation by stopping by our offices at 255 S. Trade Street in Tryon or by calling (828) 859-5314.