



Matt Schekel Memorial Scholarship Application

This application should be completed and sent directly to Seeds of Learning.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Age _____

School (if applicable) _____

Work Group Dates _____

Country of Service _____

Seeds of Learning actively recruits and supports volunteers from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. All youth volunteers (under 30) who have been accepted into the work group program may apply for this scholarship. The average scholarship amount is approximately \$250.00, but varies based on funds available and proven financial need.

To apply:

- Complete the information on this page (including your signature below).
- Write a 1 - 2 page application letter addressing each of the points listed in the guidelines on the following page.
- If you are under 18 years of age, include an accompanying letter from a parent describing the financial need for the scholarship.
- Optional: include up to two letters of recommendations from family members, friends, or coworkers.

Completed applications and letters must be received by the SOL office no later than **March 10, 2010** for groups traveling January - April and no later than **May 20, 2010** for group traveling June - August.

Please read and sign below:

If I am chosen to receive a Matt Schekel Memorial Scholarship, I agree to:

- Provide a service to SOL in the year following the completion of my work group experience (e.g. write an article, make a presentation, participate in local SOL programs and events, develop a SOL awareness activity with other youth).
- Write a one-page reflection on my trip, outlining how the experience affected me, and what I learned from it *within 21 days* of my return

I have read and agree to the two points listed above: _____ (signature)



Scholarship Application Letter Requirements

In the Application Letter, *all* applicants must:

1. Describe a significant financial need for a scholarship, including (for those under 18 years of age) a supporting statement from a parent or guardian.
2. Explain your reasons for wanting to become a SOL work group volunteer, your goals as you see them now, and benefits you feel you will derive from this experience.
3. Explain what you feel you may offer to the SOL work group and the community where you will be volunteering (in terms of Spanish language proficiency, work and building experience, working with children, and any other skills).
4. Contact family, friends, churches, schools, and others who may be able to provide some financial support. Attached to this application form is a sample SOL letter that can be used to help you solicit additional funding support from family and friends. Indicate in your letter of application how you plan to use this SOL funding request letter.
5. Include in your letter of application a statement of ways you think you could provide a service to SOL upon the completion of your work group (see previous page for examples).

Criteria for selection are:

- Demonstration of financial need
- Demonstration (in the written letter) of skills or experiences that would be highly beneficial to the SOL workgroup service project.
- Commitment to community service

Note: Preference will be given to youth volunteers who have not formerly applied for SOL scholarship assistance.



Sample Fundraising Letters

*The letter below briefly describes SOL's work group program and projects in Central America. Regardless of whether you apply for the Matt Schekel Memorial Scholarship or not, we encourage all volunteers who need financial assistance with the cost of the work group to use the contents of this letter to write their own letter to friends, relatives, church members, school teachers, etc. You may want to suggest a donation of \$50 or so from each person. Note that the second and third paragraphs in the letter correspond to Nicaragua and El Salvador groups respectively. You should choose the appropriate paragraph to describe your trip and add in any more information you want about this trip and what it means to you. The total cost of the group is \$1300 plus airfare. SOL will not refund additional donations made beyond the deadline or total cost of the trip. SOL will thank the donors who give on your behalf and will add them to our mailing list unless we hear otherwise from the donor. **Please let the people you are soliciting support from let SOL know if they do not want to be on our mailing list.***

Dear

This summer, I hope to travel to **Nicaragua/El Salvador** and volunteer to help build and improve a much-needed school in a rural community. I will be a part of a work group organized by Seeds of Learning (SOL), a nonprofit organization based in Sonoma, California. SOL's mission is to enrich the future through education in the Americas. The work group (made up of volunteers from all over the area, with people of all ages) will spend two weeks working alongside community members to mix cement, lay bricks, and build friendships as we learn from each other. I see this experience as an opportunity to expand my understanding of my own culture as well as learn about another part of the world, and how people live there.

For Nicaragua Groups: Ciudad Darío is a small town of approximately 20,000 people, located 60 miles north of Managua, Nicaragua. Seeds of Learning works to build and improve schools in the outlying rural communities in addition to maintaining a learning resource center in Darío itself. In addition to working on the school, I may volunteer in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) in Darío to help students do homework, and participate in various activities with the students who come there.

For El Salvador Groups: In El Salvador I will work in a small community people located in a rural area. I will work with Seeds of Learning to build a school where there either is not one, or additional classrooms are needed. I will also be meeting with and working alongside some of Seeds of Learning's high school and/or university scholarship students. I will spend time visiting the cultural sites and learning more about El Salvador's education, history, economics, and politics as well.

Any support that you can give me in this trip will help very much, as I need to raise \$1300 plus airfare for the trip (which usually is \$550 - \$800). You may write a check to Seeds of Learning and be sure to put my name on the check so the money will go towards my trip. Please send the donation to me and I will submit it to SOL. All donations are tax-deductible, and SOL will send you a thank you letter as a receipt of this donation to SOL.

Thank you very much.