

## Sales-Marketing

# Multicultural scholarship program awards \$60,000 to college students

MassMutual awarded \$60,000 in scholarships and potential internship opportunities to 12 outstanding college students through a 2009 pilot program in four agencies.

The MassMutual Multicultural Scholarship Program awarded scholarships to Asian/Pacific Islander, African-American/Black and Hispanic college students pursuing a degree in accounting, business economics, finance marketing, math and/or statistics in the Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco areas.

Beyond the goodwill generated by offering scholarships in the communi-

ties where they conduct business, participating agencies said the program helped them increase brand awareness in their communities, make or enhance connections with colleges and universities with which they have or would like to have recruiting relationships, and increase their pool of recruiting prospects through direct contact with college students applying for the scholarships.

## About the program

The program was structured to offer scholarships to the three largest minority segments in the

United States: African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic. Three \$5,000 scholarships were awarded per city—one for each segment—for a total of 12 scholarships amounting to \$60,000.

Criteria were aligned with the desired background for potential new hires to optimize the program for recruiting opportunities. Agencies or home-office associates can cultivate these diverse, top-performing scholars through internships and mentoring for potential full-time employment.

The Hispanic Scholarship Fund

(HSF) administered the MassMutual Multicultural Scholarship Program. HSF has managed other multicultural programs, has collaborative working relationships with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) and the Asian-Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF), and has the infrastructure to promote the program in the local community, schools and organizations.

Based on feedback from the pilot agencies, MassMutual is expanding the Multicultural Scholarship Program for rollout to additional agencies in 2010.

## ◆ FURTHER INFO

• *Multicultural Market Development*, tel. (800) 767-1000 for:

— Nicole Bremser, director, ext. 45678.  
— Robert Subjects, director, ext. 46525.

— E-mail [multiculturalmarketing@massmutual.com](mailto:multiculturalmarketing@massmutual.com).

• *Community Responsibility*: Robin Rose, community responsibility specialist, tel. (800) 767-1000 (ext. 24888), e-mail [rrose@massmutual.com](mailto:rrose@massmutual.com).

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## Positive community relations and a bounce in recruiting

### Agencies tell how they handled and benefited from scholarship program

#### Atlanta-Brill Agency

**LOGISTICS:** The Atlanta-Brill Agency promoted the MassMutual Multicultural Scholarship Program through organizations such as the National Association for Asian-American Professionals and at recruiting events and career centers at colleges and universities with whom agency associates regularly work. The agency presented the scholarship checks during its off-site Quota Buster breakfast.

**RESULTS:** The agency increased its presence in the Korean-American community and at local colleges. General Agent William E. Brill, LUTCF, said, "An offshoot of the process is the visibility gained at local colleges like Georgia State and Kennesaw State University, which should help with branding and recruiting."

**LESSONS LEARNED:** "Now that we've been through the process and had some winners, we will leverage the opportunity at other local colleges," Mr. Brill said.

#### Houston Agency



Houston General Agent J.K. McAndrews (far left) and Chris Mendoza, director of Multicultural Market Development at MassMutual (far right), award scholarships to, from left, Malcolm Copeland, Daniel De La Rosa and Naushad Qasim at the University of Houston media center.

**LOGISTICS:** The Houston Agency works closely with the University of Houston, hosting the school's largest internship program and recruiting there for the last three years. The agency promoted the MassMutual Multicultural Scholarship Program heavily at the school and at nearby Texas A&M. The agency also worked with several associations in the Hispanic community, using e-mail, flyers, word of mouth and announcements at events.

Current and former agency interns attended the awards ceremony, held in the media center at the University of Houston. The agency is a sponsor of the media center, and its name appears on every multimedia screen and television there.

The scholarship presentation was held to coincide with the National Association of Hispanic MBAs (masters of business administration) convention at the university. The ceremony was taped and will be part of the media center video wall.

**RESULTS:** General Agent J.K. McAndrews, CLU, said, "The scholarship program enhanced our relationship with the University of Houston and allowed us to forge new relationships with the University of Houston Downtown and Prairie View

Texas A&M. The two new schools were able to see how our relationship works at the University of Houston, and one school asked me to have lunch with its board members at the next meeting to see how they can get us more involved on their campus."

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Susan Tasson, the agency's recruiting specialist, said, "It will be easier to get applicants now that the colleges have seen the scholarship program is real. They were pretty impressed. The big 'aha' for us was why we didn't have more participation. It seems students didn't think they'd have a chance to win. We needed to help students to apply. You must participate to win."

Mr. McAndrews added, "Now that we've been through it once, we have new ideas for how to promote the program next year. It's a great program, and we're really excited about it."

#### Los Angeles-Michel Agency



Los Angeles-Michel General Agent Kimberly A. Michel (far left) and the agency's marketing and selection coordinator, Michele Dibner (far right), flank scholarship winners, from left, Jamie Kwak, Loren Hinkson and Karen Perez.

**LOGISTICS:** The Los Angeles-Michel Agency worked with the home office to promote the MassMutual Multicultural Scholarship Program in print vehicles like the Korean Times and Chinese-American publications. They worked closely with local colleges to promote the availability of the application and posted an ad on the California State University of Northridge website. The scholarships were awarded at a breakfast ceremony on the Queen Mary in Long Beach, Calif., with agency associates and family and friends of the scholarship winners in attendance.

**RESULTS:** "Word of mouth was very big," said Michele "Meesha" Dibner, Los Angeles-Michel's marketing and selection coordinator, who ran the program for the agency.

"We are a diverse agency, and with agents' help, we were able to really promote this program within our communities," Ms. Dibner said. "We had a great response, with 90 or more applicants. When we hosted the grand opening of our new Korean-American office, we spoke about the multicultural scholarship program to let our guests and the press know we are committed to giving back to the community. When we do press releases, we mention the program and also discuss our other charitable work."

"We got the best response from the print publications. I think families, specifically the first generation to immigrate to the U.S., read the in-language newspapers. I received lots of phone calls from parents of college students."

**LESSONS LEARNED:** In 2010, the agency plans to add a page on its website and do more scholarship promotion on campuses.

"As I was going through the process, we realized we were holding someone's future in our hands," Ms. Dibner said. "We took the responsibility very seriously. Looking at all the applications really hit home what a great thing we were doing. It's an opportunity to give back, and we're so, so grateful MassMutual has given us an opportunity to be a part of this program."

#### San Francisco Bay Area Agency



San Francisco Bay Area General Agent Robert Fakhimi (far right), agent Rebecca Ye and Sales Manager Brian Lee (far left) award scholarships to local college students, from left, Nikolette Sphar, Ranieka Meadors and Alyssa Whitwell.

**LOGISTICS:** The San Francisco Bay Area Agency worked with a local public-relations company to promote the MassMutual Multicultural Scholarship Program. They sent out a local press release on Newswire in November 2008 and posted a large banner on the agency website. The agency also promoted the scholarship program heavily on campuses where it does recruiting.

The scholarships were awarded at an event in the agency in November 2009. Scholarship recipients and their families, media representatives and agency associates attended.

**RESULTS:** The November 2008 press release received a lot of media attention, and the agency's recruiters got a lot more visibility on campus.

"My biggest bounce from the program was the positive community relations through Google and the extra bounce we got in recruiting at college campuses," said General Agent Robert B. Fakhimi, CLU, ChFC, CFP.

"Generally, before coming in to talk with us, recruits do Google searches on the agency and my last name," he explained. "When hits come up like 'MassMutual announces multicultural scholarships' and the like, that's a big thing. The potential recruits already have a sense about our commitment to the community and are favorably disposed to the agency when they come in to talk with us."

**LESSONS LEARNED:** "Next time, I would do more up-front promotion and publicize the program sooner and longer, both the availability of the application and the awards ceremony," Mr. Fakhimi said.

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