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New initiative will offer annual opportunities for students throughout BJC hospital communities

ST. LOUIS – In response to regional community needs identified by the Ferguson Commission, BJC HealthCare is creating a new scholarship opportunity for college-bound high school seniors who plan to pursue a two- or four-year degree.

The BJC Scholars Fund will be funded by BJC and administered by The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis. Scholarships will be awarded annually to up to 14 students in communities served by BJC hospitals: St. Louis City; St. Louis County; Columbia, Farmington/Bonne Terre and Sullivan, Mo.; and the Metro East. Scholarships will be renewable through graduation or a maximum of 10 semesters, resulting in 50-60 BJC Scholars being funded each year when the program reaches full implementation.

Each scholarship will be a need-based award of up to \$10,000 per academic year at a public Missouri or Illinois state college or university in the state where the student resides. The annually renewable scholarship will be applicable toward tuition, fees, room and board, transportation and incidental costs. The Scholarship Foundation will support students and parents in taking full advantage of other state, federal and institutional funds to which students are entitled, to ensure that the BJC scholarship award completes the funding required for full year attendance.

BJC is funding the scholarship program to help take community action on the findings of “For the Sake of All” and “Forward through Ferguson.” The scholarship fund also aligns with BJC’s strong advocacy for education, in recognition of the connection between education and improved health and longevity.

“BJC is at heart a health care organization. We are also the area’s largest employer and are actively engaged with our community,” says Steve Lipstein, BJC president and CEO. “We want to take meaningful action, beyond our role as a health care provider, in helping move forward in the wake of events that shook our community two years ago.

“One need identified in the Ferguson Commission report is to increase college access and affordability. We also know statistics and studies show there is a very strong connection between higher education levels and better health outcomes. By creating this new scholarship fund, BJC hopes to make an impact in helping young people attain their educational goals and create new opportunities for a brighter and healthier future.”

The Scholarship Foundation will provide outreach services to promote the scholarship opportunity and will administer all aspects of the application and selection process, as well as ongoing support that includes advising, workshops, financial aid counseling, participation in paid internship programs and additional funding opportunities if relevant.

“We are excited to see this new opportunity for scholarship funding,” says Faith Sandler, executive director of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis. “Education and – just as important – affordable access to education are critical to set the stage for future success. We are pleased to be able to bring this opportunity to high school students in every region where BJC HealthCare has a hospital presence.”

The application process for the BJC Scholars Fund will open Jan. 1, 2017, with a deadline submission of April 15. Recipients will be announced in July 2017 for the 2017-2018 academic year. The Scholarship Foundation will begin communications and visits to high schools in eligible communities next month.

About BJC HealthCare

BJC HealthCare is one of the largest nonprofit health care organizations in the United States, delivering services to residents primarily in the greater St. Louis, southern Illinois and mid-Missouri regions. Serving the health care needs of urban, suburban and rural communities, BJC includes 15 hospitals and multiple health service organizations. Services include inpatient and outpatient care, primary care, community health and wellness, workplace health, home health, community mental health, rehabilitation, long-term care and hospice. BJC’s nationally recognized academic hospitals, Barnes-Jewish and St. Louis Children’s hospitals, are affiliated with Washington University School of Medicine.

About The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis

The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, a federally qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, opens doors to higher education through direct assistance programs for students and through active participation in many aspects of the St. Louis regional community. Founded in 1920, the Scholarship Foundation promotes and provides financial support for post-secondary education, assures that students have the information necessary to make sound financial decisions, and leads a collaborative network of community and educational partners aligned to support student preparation, transition and persistence to degree completion.