ON THE TOWN

Reflect on Girl Scout values; honor memory of Birdwell

The annual luncheon-benefiting Girl Scouts Western Oklahoma always is a great event with an abundance of fine speakers, innovative Girl Scout cookie desserts and interesting information. This year was no exception.

This year, the Juliette Low Leadership Society has gone virtual due to the pandemic, but much of the experience we have come to love about it is still there. Don't miss the opportunity to check out the live video, including those featuring the mother-daughter duo Irene and Margo Gianos, co-founder of the beauty brand Honeymoon Margo, and one honoring community leader Kay Goebel and the many speakers, including the Girl Scouts themselves. This year, the event is virtual and open to anyone who can pay the admission fee.

GUEST COLUMN

Scholarships lay foundation for stronger community

Some kids know they are bound for college, while others are not so sure. There are lots of reasons students might hold back from taking the next step in their education. Maybe no one in their family has been to college, or maybe they have lost a parent, or their family has experienced other hardships. Of course, college is expensive and paying for it can be difficult regardless of the reason.

We began our scholarship program more than 10 years ago through funding from the estate of E.K. Gaylord, founder and publisher of The Oklahoma. We have expanded the program with contributions from donors, such as Willie Elizabeth Shipley, who created a scholarship fund in 1983 for western Oklahoma high school students. Following the March Air Force Base bombing in 1995, the OCCF used $4 million in contributions to create a scholarship fund for bombing victims' children, providing a full ride to more than 140 students.

The Oklahoma Community Foundation has given thousands of Oklahoma high school students financial encouragement over the years, and we've watched them graduate and start successful careers. Some have even become lawyers, doctors, Ph.D.s and business leaders. We have a number of missions at the Community Foundation, and scholarships are among the most important. In fact, the OCCF has the largest privately funded scholarship program in the state, awarding $2.5 million in scholarships each spring. But we're not just focusing on the most gifted and talented students. We are also looking for the A and B students who are working hard in school and trying to make a difference in their communities. We have programs for students who need a leg up, such as kids from the foster care system or students from single-parent homes.

The Community Foundation is to the business of investing in the Oklahoma City Community to enhance quality of life. Each year, we invest in about 800 students because college education helps build successful citizens and successful citizens are the foundation of successful communities. Applications for the next school year are being accepted now at OSSCFacademicworks.com.

Nancy Anthony is president of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, www.OCCF.org.