

# Vasa Order of America

## Pennsylvania District No. 9

### Policy re: Scholarships

#### Background / Purpose

The Vasa Order of America began as an organization dedicated to assisting Swedish immigrants in dealing with life issues as they adjusted to life in America. As the wave of immigration subsided, the organization's focus shifted from providing benefits to preserving and understanding Swedish culture at the time of the immigration and how it has changed to the present time. While the Order still provides limited financial benefits, fellowship among people with Swedish/Scandinavian heritage and interests grew in importance for the organization.

District Lodge Pennsylvania No. 9 has had a scholarship program for youth since the early 1990's and added those for adults a number of years ago. Some may view these scholarships as simply a member benefit, but they are much more than that. For youth the purpose is to introduce and strengthen the interest in Swedish cultural heritage in a way that will develop their connection to Swedish language and culture and hopefully provide future leaders for the organization. For adults the purpose is to assist members in exploring their cultural heritage in a way that will benefit the District and all its local lodges. For both youth and adults the scholarship should result in a report to the local or district lodge, preferably in the form of a program about what was learned / accomplished. The program presentation should be in a form that can be shared with other lodges.

#### Scholarships Available

Two scholarships are available each year, one for a secondary school age youth, between the ages of 12 and 18. The youth may be a member, child or grandchild of a member. Vasa lodge membership of the youth or sponsoring member must be at least two years as of January 1 of the year of application. The youth scholarship will be for a two-week language camp at Sjölundén, the Swedish camp that is part of Concordia Language Villages program in Moorhead, MN.

An adult scholarship award to an adult member, age 21 or over and not in school, of a local lodge in DL Pennsylvania No. 9 will also be awarded **every other year** in the odd calendar years. Local lodge membership must be for a minimum of two years as of January 1 of the year of application. The adult scholarship should have significant educational content. It might, for example, be:

- researching the motivations of why people of a certain area (including relatives) emigrated,
- investigating the historic background and development of a region in Sweden,
- developing skills in genealogical research (including using resources available at the VOA National Archives),
- learning traditional music or dances, or other topic of interest.

Specifically working at the VOA National Archives for two weeks on a project is encouraged. An important dimension in evaluating adult scholarship applications will be how the local lodge and district will benefit from the project/activity.

## **Application Process**

Scholarships will be awarded based on applications submitted. A copy of the both Youth and Adult applications are attached.

Applications must be submitted (postmarked) to the Vice District Master, District Lodge Pennsylvania No. 9, by March 1. Scholarship awards for each year will be announced by March 31. A 4-member district committee, chaired by the Vice District Master, will judge / evaluate the applications and recommend the award. The District Executive Board will approve all awards before any are granted.

There is no requirement that scholarships shall be awarded each year if satisfactory applications are not received. Scholarship funds will not be held over to the following year(s).

## **Scholarship Award Amounts**

For the **Youth Scholarship**, the District will pay Concordia Language Villages the two-week camp fee directly (2015 CLV fee was around \$1,900). A travel allowance of up to \$300 will be granted to the sponsoring parents or grandparents, based on receipt of bills for the travel. The deadline for submission of receipts for travel is October 1. If no receipts are received by the deadline no travel allowance will be awarded.

The **Adult Scholarship** award will be up to \$3,000 and the receipted amount will be paid based on the Vice District Master for DL PA No. 9 receiving receipts for project expenditures. Expenditures for travel may include mileage for a personal automobile at \$0.35 per mile if it is demonstrated that such an expense is necessary.