

Ruth and Willis Piehl Educational Awards Fund

-2017-

Introduction

Initial funding for Ruth and Willis Piehl Educational Awards Fund came from the generosity of the family of Ruth and Willis Piehl. Ruth and Willis were passionate advocates for education in general and for what Lutheran Senior Services models in older adult care in particular. The Fund, with the purpose of tangibly enhancing careers for existing LSS employees and thus quality of care, is a continuation of Willis' lifetime of pioneering work. It is hoped that the Fund will grow through current and deferred gifts and grants so there can be an ever growing encouragement and financial assistance for increasing the knowledge and skills of LSS employees in furthering our mission of "Older Adults Living Life to the Fullest".

Purpose

The Ruth and Willis Piehl Educational Awards Fund is designed to provide LSS employees with encouragement and financial incentive to develop personally and professionally--enhancing their contributions to the LSS mission. Enhanced contributions can result from further education and training in employee's current role, but also can result from preparing for a new role (e.g. CNA or Housekeeping to LPN). The Fund helps lessen the financial burden that often hinders one's learning opportunities. Resources can be awarded for books, supplies, most fees (e.g. lab fees and fees required for testing, but not for late fees), as well as the costs of programs not covered by the LSS Tuition Reimbursement program necessary for job-related certifications and special training as well as GEDs and English as a second language. Resources will not be awarded for continuing education to maintain professional license or certification.

Eligibility

All Full Time, Weekend Option, Part Time and Casual employees in good standing, no matter what length of service, may apply for educational awards from the Ruth and Willis Piehl Educational Awards Fund. "In good standing" is defined as having not received a final warning or suspension within the previous 12 months and "Successful" or higher in their most recent Performance Review. The application is found on the LSS benefits website (www.LSSLiving.org/Benefits) on the "Other Benefits" tab, and must include employee's Executive Director's approval. Full Time and Weekend Option employees may receive up to 100% of itemized costs for books, supplies and fees for requested educational opportunity. Awards to less than full time employees (i.e. Part Time and Casual) are prorated and capped by the percentage calculation of the number of hours worked in the

previous 6 months divided by 1,040 (e.g. worked 600 hours, $600/1040 = 58\%$ possible reimbursement). Study and testing for the educational opportunities would be on non-work time.

Awards

Each Executive Director (ED) reviews requests for their staff (or in the case of Home Office staff, the employee's Senior Leader) and approves/denies, then forwards the completed application on to their HR representative. The HR representative reviews the request and completes their portion, then forwards the request on to Home Office HR for processing. The annual amount of awards will be limited to awarding no more than 10% of beginning year Fund balance for the entire calendar year. Should there be higher demand than budget available, staff will be instructed to re-apply the following year or consider an alternative educational assistance benefit available through LSS. Should the beginning of year Fund balance be less than \$10,000, the sum of awards for the calendar year may not exceed \$2,000 until Fund is exhausted. All Education Award winners will be announced in LSS publications. The resources awarded will be determined by a detailed documentation of qualifying expenses, with copies of receipts when possible, and awarded prior to beginning the educational opportunity. Any resources not used in manner awarded must be returned to the Ruth and Willis Piehl Educational Awards Fund.

Award Limitations

Full Time awardees are limited to Educational Awards of \$500.00 in any 12-month period and a lifetime maximum Educational Awards of \$5,000. Less than full time employees have the same 12-month and lifetime limits but prorated and capped by their percentage calculation described in the "Eligibility" section above.

Conclusion

The Ruth and Willis Piehl Educational Awards Fund embodies the following: 1) extends the Piehl legacy, 2) defines a worthy charitable support opportunity, 3) enhances employee careers and job satisfaction, 4) reduces employee turnover, 5) reduces need for hiring and retraining and ultimately 6) helps fulfill the LSS mission!