

April 19, 2007-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- Contact [Stuart Rich](#) at 253-350-1345 or [Tim Edwards](#) at 253-833-6633

Auburn Rotarians stage 24th annual scholarship show to help local youth pay for college.

A tradition that started before today's high school seniors were even born is now in its 24th year of helping Auburn kids achieve the dream of a college education. The Auburn Rotary Scholarship show was started in 1983 with a vision of showing local youth that their community believed in their dreams. The Auburn Rotary Club is part of Rotary International, a global network of 1.2 million community volunteers in more than 160 countries. The first show was put together with donated local talent. Don Steele, Seattle superintendent of schools with his country band, and Diana Schuur, an Auburn girl whose father was a captain on the local police force, headlined the first show. The support of the community was encouraging and a tradition was born. From the beginning, radio station KMPS has been a stalwart supporter, providing much needed publicity, talent contacts and encouragement.

The Auburn Rotary Scholarship Show has since evolved into a premier Pacific Northwest event for country music. Prior award-winning artists have included Kathy Mattea, Diamond Rio, Joe Diffie, Patty Loveless, Chely Wright, Phil Vassar, Keith Anderson, and Keith Urban just to name a few. Rather than taking place in a typical venue where concertgoers are sitting far away from the artist, the event is held in the Auburn Performing Arts Center, home of the Auburn Symphony. This allows for excellent close- in seating throughout the hall. The intimate venue, talented artists and excellent cause makes many fans return year after year. This year's artist is Neil McCoy, voted as the Country Entertainer of the year for two years in row. Opening for Neil will be 2006 American Idol finalist, Bucky Covington. The concert is a limited engagement for one night only, May 12th, with shows at 5 and 9pm. Special VIP ticket holders will have dinner on-site between the shows and the opportunity to meet the stars in person.

A committee of 10 Auburn Rotarians now oversees the planning and operations of the show as well as the disbursement of the funds generated to outgoing seniors through an application and selection process. The expenditures and income from the show are separate from the general club funds, and are tracked under the umbrella of the Rotary International Charitable Foundation. Scholarships can be used at a trade school, community college or 4 year institution. Over the years, approximately \$500,000 has been awarded to over 600 students.

One of the highlights of the weekly Rotary meetings is when Auburn Superintendent of Schools and Rotarian Linda Cowan reads letters to the club in the months after scholarships have been awarded. When contacted recently, a few past recipients had this to say; "Thank you so much for the scholarship. I appreciate all the efforts Rotary makes to ensure a better education for the students in our community."- Kendra L. "Thank you for the wonderful scholarship. I am on my way to Mexico to work at an orphanage, taking the kindness Rotary has given me and sharing it with the world."- Jacklyn K. "When I received the scholarship award, I was so excited that I danced across my living room with my mother looking at me in that loving way that only a mother could."- Adam W. "This scholarship will help me on my quest to achieve my goals and I hope that someday I can pass this generosity on to future generations."-Adam B. "My family's financial situation has been difficult the past few years so this scholarship really makes a difference for me to go to college. Rotary makes the world a better place and inspires me to do my part when my time comes."-Beverly F.

When committee chairman Tim Edwards was asked why he has been involved with such a time consuming endeavor for so many years, he answered simply, "For the kids... I was once a young person that took great encouragement from the faith that a few organizations placed in me during my college years. Their scholarships and interest in me made a big impact. I wanted to pass that feeling on to others." It is a common sentiment shared by others on the committee and by Auburn Rotarians as a whole.

Many hours of donated labor, materials and dollars go into making the show a success. However, a big part of what makes it truly special is the support of the community. Without an excellent turnout each year, scholarship funds would not be available. It's not just an exceptional concert. It's a chance to participate in the dreams of our youth...and the leaders of tomorrow.

General admission tickets are \$30 and are available through Ticketmaster. Additionally, a limited number of special VIP packages are available and include 4 prime seats, a BBQ dinner by Longhorn and a chance to meet and be photographed with the stars. They are only available by calling 253-833-6633.

-Stuart Rich, Auburn Rotary Public Relations Spokesperson