

Stone Tower Education Program (STEP)

Approved by Stone Tower SDA Church Board, 2018-11-20

Purpose

The purpose of the Stone Tower Education Program (STEP) is to encourage and provide financial assistance to students and families desiring a Christian Education in grades K through 12. Stone Tower recognizes that our youth of today will be our leaders tomorrow. We want to encourage families to provide their children with a Christian education. We want to partner with families by providing some financial assistance for children in grades K through 12.

The Goal of Christian Education

According to Ellen White, in the book Education (page 20), “The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.”

Additionally, on page 13, “True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”

Eligibility

Parents and/or students must be members in regular standing of Stone Tower SDA Church. For the purposes of this document, **regular standing** is defined as being listed on the Stone Tower Seventh-day Adventist Church membership rolls and not under church discipline. Assistance is available for students attending elementary and/or secondary schools associated with the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

We encourage STEP applicants and their families to:

- attend Sabbath School and church services averaging 3 times per month.
- be faithful in returning tithes and offerings in accordance to Malachi 3:6-12.
- actively participate in regularly scheduled work bees, business meetings, and other church related activities.

Students receiving STEP assistance are strongly encouraged to maintain a:

- Grade point average of 2.0 or better
- Satisfactory attendance and tardiness records according to school policy
- Satisfactory conduct record per school guidelines

Payments

Tuition payments will be mailed to the child's school after the end of each quarter. It will be the parent's responsibility to submit a copy of the child's report card and attendance record to the Education Chair. If grades are within acceptable range, a quarterly check will be mailed to the school. Please refer to the application packet for payment schedule.

STEP Application Process

An application packet for tuition assistance shall be submitted to the Education Committee or designee no later than July 15th for assistance to begin in September.

Members of the Education or Finance Committee are available to assist families in completing the required forms.

After a review of the application, the Education Committee may request a personal visit to discuss the application and financial request.

After the application and interview process has been completed, the Education Committee will submit the names of those requesting financial aid to the Stone Tower Church Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer in the absence of the Treasurer.

The Treasurer will submit all financial aid requests to the Finance and Personnel Committee for inclusion in the annual church budget.

The church board then recommends to the church in business meeting the annual church budget which is then approved or disapproved by the church in business meeting. Once the annual budget has been approved, then all approved financial aid requests are communicated to STEP applicants.

If a request for financial aid has been denied, the Education Committee will review with the applicant family the specific reasons.

Appeal Process

If a STEP applicant's request for financial aid is denied by the Education Committee, the applicant may ask that the request be reconsidered based on information that may not have been available or included during the initial application.

If the Education Committee denies the request on a second review of additional information, the STEP applicant may request that the Church Board review the request for financial aid. The Church Board's decision shall be final.

Confidentiality

All information provided to the Education Committee is considered confidential and is handled on a need to know basis. The Finance and Personnel Committee and Church Board are provided the names of STEP applicants and the financial aid requested because of their need to know the amount of funds requested for budget purposes but they are not provided information regarding income, expenses and personal assets and liabilities.

Level of Assistance

Tuition assistance is always dependent on available funding for educational assistance which may vary from year-to-year. The following are general guidelines as it relates to tuition assistance:

Assistance is limited to \$100/month per student depending on available funds. (NOTE: Students attending Portland Adventist Academy will automatically receive an additional \$50.00 per month to be applied towards their tuition. Stone Tower is not a constituent church of PAA so students are charged an additional \$500.00 per year. Stone Tower is committed to fund this cost, if funds are available.)

If additional dollars are available, the Education Committee can recommend to the Finance Committee and Church Board an exception to the \$100/month policy based on the specific situation and need of a given family. The Church Board at its discretion decides, the amount and if the exception to policy is appropriate.

All donations received from individual donors shall be placed in the general Student Aid Fund. A receipt for a tax deduction will be issued in January of the following year. If a donor wants the donation to go to a specific student, the treasurer should request that the donor issue a check directly to the school on behalf of the student. No receipt can be issued for this, as it is not tax deductible.

Other Considerations

Because the education fund comes through the donation of members who often make great sacrifices so that Stone Tower students can receive a Christian Education, families assisted by such funds are expected to make similar sacrifices in support of providing their children with a God ordained Christian Education. Accordingly, parents are advised to be mindful of the following:

Spending on non-essential or luxury items that could go toward the education of their children should be avoided. Please note the educational assistance fund is not available to help individuals maintain a certain life style.

Families should encourage their children to work during the school year and summer. Sometimes part-time jobs may be available at our schools

When possible both parents are encouraged to be employed unless small children are present in the home, or one parent is unable to work due to medical or for other reason i.e. caring for an aging parent, sick relative, etc.

Participating families are expected to visibly support the Stone Tower Church by attendance at church functions including work bees and outreach projects.

Other Questions or Concerns

Other questions or concerns STEP applicants may have regarding the policies or procedures associated with the STEP program should be addressed to the Education Committee Chair or members of the Committee. If there is no functioning Education Committee,

Applicant/Parent: We have read, understand and accept the eligibility and other requirements associated with the Stone Tower Education Program. Please sign below; make a copy for your records and return a copy to Education Committee chairperson.

Student _____ Date _____

Parent _____ Date _____

Parent _____ Date _____