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## HCEF continuing to support schools

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The Henderson County Education Foundation needs you to help it support the county's school system and its students.

That was the message attendees heard Sunday at the HCEF's fifth annual Membership Kick-Off and Ice Cream Social at the Bullington Center.

HCEF is the fundraising arm of Henderson County Public Schools. The organization helps provide money through grants and scholarships to teachers and students or wherever there is a need within the public school system in Henderson County.



MIKE DIRKS/TIMES-NEWS

Members of the North Henderson High School Band play during the Henderson County Education Foundation's fifth annual Membership Kick-off and Ice Cream Social at the Bullington Center.

HCEF is awarding 31 scholarships worth a combined total of \$62,000 to students for the 2009-2010 school year, said Don Jones, HCEF Executive Director.

Several scholarship winners were on hand at the event to thank contributors and share how much the HCEF money meant to them.

"Yesterday is an expired check — you can't change the past, tomorrow is a check without a date, and today is an effective check that can be used in so many ways to change the lives of people today," said Francisco Rodriguez, a rising senior studying mechanical engineering at N.C. State University. "I want to ask you to use this check in a strategic and intelligent manner."

The 21-year-old received a four-year scholarship of \$80,000 to attend college, he said. Rodriguez told the audience about his college career which included an internship last year with NASA at Langley Research Center. He is currently doing research in medical robotics with an N.C. State professor, he added.

"It wouldn't have been possible without the Foundation and I will always be grateful," Rodriguez said.

Jones also awarded a check for \$1,000 from HCEF to the North Henderson High School marching band to help the band purchase instruments. The band experienced a jump in membership with the incoming freshman class which pushed the band's total to 83 students, Jones said.

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