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The Scholarship Provider of the Year Award recognizes scholarship providers who demonstrate exceptional leadership, efficiency and impact in their support of higher education. Two winners are selected for this honor each year, one from among college and university providers and one from among independent providers. Fastweb has sponsored this prestigious award since its inception twelve years ago. Each winner receives a monetary award of \$2,500 designated for their scholarship fund.

Both of this year's winners demonstrate that scholarships are about more than just providing money for college. It's about eliminating all barriers to student success. These programs engage the scholarship recipients through proactive intervention efforts such as mentoring, counseling and community-building programs. They have demonstrated the effectiveness of their programs by tracking and evaluating measurable outcomes, such as above-average retention and graduation rates.

The 2011 College & University Scholarship Provider of the Year award winner is the Scholarship Program Office of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan

Lead by Douglas Fletcher, the LSA Scholarship Program Office at the University of Michigan awards more than \$8 million per year to more than 1,000 undergraduate students. The Scholarship Program Office has overseen a five-fold increase in scholarships over the last decade, and a shift from merit-based scholarships to scholarships that enable access and success for students from diverse, underrepresented and at-risk populations. These students include first-generation college students, students from single-parent homes and students who have faced adversity. The Scholarship Program Office pursues a variety of proactive intervention efforts for scholarship recipients. Some of these efforts concentrate on making students feel like an individual rather than a number at a large university, such as personalized and individualized communications and appointments about their grades and accomplishments. Other efforts try to give students a sense of belonging in a community of scholarship recipients through a scholarship student organization (The Society of LSA Scholars), discussion groups, community service, increased one-on-one contact with faculty and other community-building activities. The Scholarship Program Office takes a holistic approach, integrating its efforts with other university offices to cut through bureaucracy to personally help students find and access the services they need, especially for students in crisis situations. The Scholarship Program Office has a 100% retention rate, all the more remarkable because many of the students come from diverse, low socio-economic status backgrounds.

The 2011 Independent Scholarship Provider of the Year award winner is 10,000 Degrees

Since its founding in 1981 as the Marin Educational Foundation, 10,000 Degrees has awarded over 30,000 scholarships totaling more than \$47 million to low-income and first-generation college students from the Marin, Sonoma and Solano Counties in California. The foundation operates a variety of programs for low-income students at every stage of the education pipeline, from elementary school through college completion. These programs and services include early awareness efforts, community outreach efforts focused on college preparation and planning, support for completing the FAFSA and Cal Grant applications, personalized counseling services and a dedicated college completion coordinator. The foundation's goals include increasing high school graduation rates, matching students with a suitable college or university, increasing persistence in college and increasing Bachelor's degree attainment rates. Of the scholarship recipients who enroll at four-year institutions, 83% have earned a Bachelor's degree within six years, compared with the national average of 11% for low-income, first generation college students.

About Fastweb

Fastweb is the nation's recognized leader in helping students pay for school, by providing scholarship and financial aid information, as well as information about jobs and internships. More than 50 million* members have benefited from Fastweb's information and services. Fastweb lets students create a personalized profile that can be matched against its expansive databases of colleges and scholarships. As the oldest and most popular free online scholarship matching service, the database has more than 1.5 million scholarships totaling over \$3.4 billion. (*9 million are active users of the site.) For more information, visit www.fastweb.com.

About the National Scholarship Providers Association

The National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) is the national professional organization for scholarship sponsors, with more than 250 scholarship programs as members. NSPA's mission is to advance the collective impact of scholarship providers and the scholarships they award, by sharing best practices, providing professional development opportunities and promoting student access and success in higher education. For more information, visit www.scholarshipproviders.org.