

Mercedes-Benz to award \$1.5 million to first generation college-bound students

Mercedes-Benz USA (MBUSA), with support from Mercedes-Benz of Houston North and Mercedes-Benz dealers nationwide, announced that it will make \$1.5 million in scholarship funding available to students who are the first generation in their families to attend college.

"With the escalating costs of a college education, access to financial resources is a challenge for many students in our community," said Walter Weibel, of Mercedes-Benz of Houston North. "Through Drive Your Future, MBUSA together with the dealer network is trying to make it a little easier for Houston-area high school students to be successful in pursuing their educational goals. These students are going to be the leaders of the next generation, and we want to do what we

can to help them realize their potential."

Drive Your Future: The Mercedes-Benz USA Scholarship Program, now in its third year, will grant \$10,000 scholarships (\$2,500 per year for four years) to 100 high school seniors across the country who demonstrate financial need and exceptional achievement in the areas of academic performance, leadership and school and community activities.

An additional \$500,000 will establish performing arts scholarships for college-bound students who plan to pursue a degree in music, theater/drama, dance or film. MBUSA will grant \$10,000 scholarships (\$2,500 per year for four years) to 50 high school seniors across the country. These scholarships are part of a new initiative, Drive Your Future performance

awards, which aims to inspire young people to reach for the stars and achieve their dreams by providing access to music and arts education programs as well as support in the form of scholarships.

"According to The College Board's Trends in College Pricing 2005, students borrowed almost \$14 billion dollars from nonfederal sources to help finance their education in academic year 2004-2005," said Marilyn Rundell, vice president of Scholarship America. "For first generation college-bound students, particularly those from underserved communities, the availability of financial assistance for their first year of college may be a deciding factor in whether or not to continue their education. Scholarships, such as the ones being offered by Mercedes-Benz USA, help ease

the financial burden placed on aspiring collegians and make their dream of obtaining a post-secondary degree more attainable."

The scholarship program and the Mercedes-Benz performance awards were developed to respond to a critical need for scholarships to help students offset the costs of postsecondary education. Administered by Scholarship America, Mercedes-Benz Drive Your Future is part of a broader philanthropic initiative aimed at educating and empowering future generations to help them become the leaders of their generation.

Students can visit www.mbusa.com/drivefuture to learn more about the programs and access application materials through the Feb. 10, 2006, deadline. Scholarship recipients will be announced in May 2006.