

# **THE HISTORY of the Living Endowment Fund and AMBUCS™ Scholar-Scholarships for Therapists**

**I**n 1948, AMBUCS™ delegates adopted a national objective to aid children with cerebral palsy, known then as spastic paralysis. AMBUCS established a non-profit organization to collect and disburse funds for these children and called it the American Business Clubs Spastic Paralysis Fund, Inc.

Members soon realized that not enough trained therapists were available to help children afflicted with cerebral palsy. To help fill this critical need, they developed in 1955 a national cerebral palsy scholarship program to assist qualified students in continuing their education in physical, occupational and speech/hearing therapy

AMBUCS™ leadership sought a continuing source of income to fund the AMBUCS™ Scholars-Scholarships for Therapists Program. Because few members could afford to support the program if asked to give \$1,000 per person, leadership decided that the membership could easily each contribute the yearly interest a \$1,000 investment could earn. It is the members of AMBUCS™ that are the Living Endowment Fund. Those who participated in the fund were issued shares of stock, which they pledged to pay the interest on annually.

## **The Living Endowment Fund Today**

The Living Endowment Fund was created in 1955 to fulfill the purpose of providing a continuous source of funding for the AMBUCS Scholars- Scholarships for Therapists program. But, as the mission of AMBUCS expanded, so did its programs.

The Living Endowment Fund now supports three programs: AMBUCS Scholars-Scholarships for Therapists, AmBility and Cornerstone Growth and Development. Donors are now able to direct donations to any of these three areas.

## **AMBUCS™ Scholars-Scholarship for Therapists**

Since 1955, the program has provided scholarship awards to 12,641 students totaling more than \$6.6 million dollars through the Living Endowment Fund.

During the first year of the program in 1955, \$4,880 was awarded. As the fund continued to grow through the years, the largest amount was granted in 1997. A total of 435 awards were given that year, totaling more than \$278,750.

During the most recent award process, 211 scholarships were granted totaling \$121,950 for the 2005-2006 school year. The average award was \$577.96. Of the 2,188 applicants, 393 were chapter sponsored. Of those, 173 received awards.

Scholarships are awarded to students studying physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology and audiology. Students must also meet educational and financial criteria.

The AMBUCS Scholars-Scholarships for Therapists program serves double duty. Not only does it help deserving students complete their higher education, it helps place trained therapists in the field to help people with disabilities. One scholarship helps to provide therapy to hundreds of people over the course of a therapist's career.

### **AmBility™ Program**

The AmBility program was adopted officially as a national program in 1998. It is a combination of the terms AMBUCS and mobility and represents AMBUCS' dedication to creating mobility and independence for those with disabilities.

By 1998, the AmTryke® therapeutic tricycle project had shown to be a great success within the organization but only focused on a small slice of the population with disabilities. The National Board of Directors thought that a larger strategy needed to be employed to help more people. The AmBility program was the result of this strategy with the AmTryke project remaining the cornerstone.

The goal of the program was focused on two areas: equipment and processes. The AmTryke therapeutic tricycle remained the cornerstone of the efforts, but the AmBility Advisory Board would continue to pursue other developments of new or existing therapy devices. Chapters are encouraged to submit new ideas for break-through projects like the AmTryke therapeutic tricycle.

The goal was to utilize a therapist referral system as a gateway to qualify people to receive equipment, using both the AMBUCS Resource Center and the AMBUCS Web site as a guide and clearinghouse for information about equipment, supplies and contacts. AMBUCS would promote linkage with manufactures, dealers and corporate sponsors who can help supply mobility items.

Many projects, other than the AmTryke therapeutic tricycle project, fall under the AmBility umbrella. They include: Demonstration Sites, the Mobile DemoSite project, ramp building, accessible playgrounds, Before the Fall- a bathroom safety program for those at risk of falling, and the ASK Project- computer recycling project.

### **Cornerstone Growth and Development**

Cornerstone is the newest addition to the Living Endowment Fund. This fund was established in the late 1990s by the National Board of Directors to provide financing for the growth and development of the association.

Contributions designated to the Cornerstone Fund are used to finance new chapter building in remote areas or for special growth programs approved by the National Board of Directors. Most recently, the Cornerstone Fund provided financial support for new club building efforts in states where a AMBUCS chapter did not exist.