



Peoria Promise Foundation
331 Fulton Suite 310
Peoria, IL 61602
309.696.0951

April 2, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Did you know that Peoria Promise sent over 240 students to college this past year with the help from local businesses and individuals? More than 500 students have applied for the Peoria Promise scholarship for the 2009/2010 school year. Your participation is critically needed now for the continued success of the program.

With a goal of creating a more vibrant economy for Peoria, a group of community minded individuals led by Mayor Jim Ardis started the Peoria Promise Foundation in 2007. The mission of the organization is to support economic development in the city of Peoria through enhancement of workforce skills and academic opportunities for the graduates of Peoria schools. Our economy is directly influenced by the level of education and skills of the work force.

Similar programs in communities like ours have seen:

- Better educated local workforce and corresponding income level increases
- Reduced dropout rate and increased high school graduation rate
- Increased college attendance and completion rate with narrowing of attendance gap by income and race
- 10% enrollment gain following decades of declining enrollment
- 86% of funded students stay in the community
- Increased tax revenues through population growth
- Housing market improvement: Homes sold rose almost 7%, compared to about 5% regional decline. Community median home price rose almost 4%.

Since 1975, the average income of American high school graduates has fallen in real terms by 1% while that of college graduates has increased by 19%. It is said that approximately two-thirds of the jobs created by the stimulus package will require some form of postsecondary education, including degrees and credentials. President Obama believes that we need to encourage "high-wage, high-value work" through investment in community colleges and other forms of advanced training.

The goal Peoria Promise is to improve Peoria's economy via education. The motivation of a full scholarship to Illinois Central College not only encourages students to graduate from high school, but also allows them the opportunity of a college education.

Why support Peoria Promise? Economic development is the key and is what sets the program apart from all other scholarships. Peoria Promise is not just a scholarship program; it is designed to be a catalyst to making Peoria an even greater community. 86% of students that attend ICC stay in the community.

The organization is funded entirely by local businesses and individual citizens like you. Your support will make a difference in ensuring that Peoria Promise is able to continue educating our future workforce and improving our economy. To donate online go to

www.peoriapromise.org/donations or send a check made payable to Peoria Promise to 331 Fulton St. Suite 310, Peoria, IL 61602.

I sincerely believe that there is no greater building block than the education of our children. I appreciate your support of this organization, which is much more than a scholarship; it is the foundation for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tara Gerstner".

Tara Gerstner
Peoria Promise – Executive Director