



LEARN
EARN
RETURN

———— 2011-2012 ————

———— NISWONGER FOUNDATION ————

———— ANNUAL REPORT ————

*To create opportunities for
individual and community growth
through education and other sustainable projects.*

NISWONGER FOUNDATION
OFFICERS AND STAFF

SCOTT M. NISWONGER
President

NIKKI L. NISWONGER
Secretary

LINDA IRWIN
Vice President

DR. NANCY DISHNER
Vice President

KATHY O'DELL
Office Manager

BARBARA BATES
Executive Assistant

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Scott M. Niswonger

Last year, we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Niswonger Foundation. Ten years ago, I never envisioned the progress that the Foundation would make. While it was important to pause and celebrate our accomplishments, my greatest source of pride is that our Foundation team members have an unbelievable passion for our work and are constantly seeking the next challenge.

Our School Partnership program stands as a shining example of the direction for the next decade. We have learned that an important key to success is bringing committed people to the table. We have taken our concept of partnership to a new level with the “Investing in Innovation” grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education. We welcomed private sector match support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rural School and Community Trust, and the JP Morgan Foundation. Through our combined resources, we will see \$21 million invested in regional high schools during a five-year period. In keeping with our philosophy

of “Learn, Earn and Return,” these resources are singularly focused on ensuring all students graduate from high school prepared for college or are career ready.

In the 2012 Annual Report, you will see “Learn, Earn and Return” is firmly embedded in our Scholarship and Leadership program. We take the brightest young leaders in Northeast Tennessee, provide them the opportunity to receive the best college education possible, and supplement that education with four years of leadership development activities. The plan is to see Niswonger Scholars come back to the region with not only strong earning potential, but an entrepreneurial spirit and overwhelming desire to return their talents and energy to the region. The message that threads its way through every effort with our Scholars is the reminder of their responsibility to identify opportunities to serve.

Three key words have been repeated throughout my message – opportunity, responsibility and commitment. While at first this seemed like just a “stream of thought” as I was writing, it occurred to me that these words are exactly matched to our philosophy of “Learn, Earn and Return.” There is no greater message that we could give to the leadership of our communities, the school leaders with whom we work, the students who are served through our programs, and to the Niswonger Scholars, than the importance of taking advantage of the **opportunity to learn** as much as possible; the **responsibility to earn** a living that supports the growth of their families and community; and a **commitment to return** in greater measure than has been given.

To continue to be successful, we need committed people at the table. Join us!

Scott M. Niswonger

President and Founder

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

- William Butler Yeats

In the Message from the President, Scott M. Niswonger spoke of the importance of getting committed people to the table to improve education. This goal could not be more evident than through the work of the Northeast Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium (NETCO). NETCO is supported by the “Investing in Innovation” grant, made possible by the U.S. Department of Education, with matching funds from the Niswonger Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rural School and Community Trust, and the JP Morgan Foundation.

The Consortium unites the resources and leadership of the 15 school systems/29 high schools in Northeast Tennessee in a concerted effort to ensure that the students in our region graduate from high school prepared for college or are career ready. The strategies being used to achieve these goals include:

1) expanding dual enrollment programs; 2) increasing advanced placement (AP courses); 3) increasing distance learning courses; 4) increasing online learning courses; and 5) providing additional college and career counseling resources to every high school student in the region.

The first year of this five year grant has seen impressive results. As an example, given that the high schools in our region are overwhelmingly rural, course availability, particularly rigorous college preparatory courses such as advanced mathematics and sciences, place a financial burden on small school systems. This assumes that teachers can even be identified to provide the instruction. Foreign language instruction is particularly limited, often to only one language per school. Advanced placement and dual enrollment courses were previously limited or non-existent in most of our high schools. These limitations in course availability



Northeast Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium Staff

place our region’s students in a challenging position as they face competition for college selection, scholarships and career readiness.

With NETCO uniting the resources of our school systems, in this past year over 1600 of the region’s high school students enrolled in online instruction designed to expand their course options and college readiness. More than 30 distance learning classes were implemented this past year, with a student enrollment of 600. For some of our school systems, this represented the first time that distance learning was made available. This effort has not only expanded course options, but has provided an opportunity for the expertise of our classroom teachers to be more fully utilized without placing additional resource constraints on these rural school systems.

Student counseling and advisement are major goals of this effort. In the past year, our eight NETCO school counselors have made over 12,000 individual contacts with our region’s students, have trained more than 1300 to use the College for TN career system, and have met with over 6000 students in group settings, while assisting in testing 5000 students. NETCO counselors have co-hosted 28 parent/student financial aid nights to assist in completing the college application and financial aid processes, and have sponsored 16 college visits.

An important focus of the work of NETCO is providing professional development opportunities for our region’s classroom teachers and school leaders. Significant in these efforts was the ***Sixth Annual Niswonger Foundation School Success Symposium***. Over 600 educators were in attendance for a keynote address from



2012 School Success Symposium



Clinch High School Class of 2012

Rachel Tompkins, former president and current senior fellow of the Rural School and Community Trust. A selection of 35 presentations and workshops provided an opportunity for these educators to learn about best practices and to share ideas with their regional colleagues. **Collaborative Professional Development Day** united more than 900 high school teachers from across the region at 10 different sites, based on their subject area of expertise.

NETCO has also supported 77 of our region's teachers in completing advanced placement training in 15 subject areas. Thirty-two school administrators representing 27 of NETCO's 29 high schools attended the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida. The next exciting goal is a **Regional Professional Development Day**, representing the first time that all Northeast Tennessee school systems have designated a common professional development experience. This experience is planned for November 6, 2012.

The critical importance of technology has not been overlooked in the work of NETCO. This past academic year, over \$143,000 has been provided for the technology upgrades needed at each school. Over \$75,000 has been invested in internet access/bandwidth upgrades. Two hundred thirty two video conferencing units have been installed in these schools.

And to think that we are only near the end of the second of a five-year effort for the Northeast Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium. The best is yet to come!

NETCO Staff Members

- Linda Irwin – *Executive Director*
- Denise Arnold – *Director of Learning Resources*
- Vivian Franklin – *Director of College and Career Counseling*
- Dr. Blair Henley – *Director of Technology*

- Robbie Mitchell – *Director of Professional Development*
- Larry Neas – *Compliance Officer*
- Kathy O'Dell – *Bookkeeper*

Curriculum Specialist:

- Dr. Richard Kitzmiller
- Dr. Carolyn McPherson
- Marsha Ottem
- Dale Schneitman

Counselors:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Darrin Burchette | Jessica Jennings |
| Brandi Caudill | Kristi Johnson |
| Amy French | Melissa Overbay |
| Donnell Goode | Julina Pyanoe |

NETCO Advisory Board:

- Scott M. Niswonger - *Niswonger Foundation*
- Linda Irwin – *Niswonger Foundation*
- Scott Benson – *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*
- Denise Brown – *Unicoi County Schools*
- Angela Buckles – *Sullivan County*
- Dr. Lori Campbell – *Walters State Community College*
- Erin O'Hara – *Tennessee Department of Education*
- Dr. Vicki Kirk – *Greene County Schools*
- Dr. Gary Lilly – *Bristol City Schools*
- Dr. Dale Lynch – *Hamblen County*
- Dr. Nancy Moody – *Tusculum College*
- Dr. Jeff Moorhouse – *Hamblen County*
- Dr. Linda Stroud – *Greeneville City Schools*
- Jamie Woodson – *State Consortium on Reform in Education*



(Far Left/Far Right) Robert Mahaffey and Rachel Tompkins, Rural School and Community Trust (Center) Scott M. Niswonger and Linda Irwin, Niswonger Foundation

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

- Mahatma Gandhi



Niswonger Scholars joined by Arun Gandhi, Scott and Nikki Niswonger

Chosen from the region's most promising high school seniors, Niswonger Scholars are provided an opportunity to attend the college of their choice while participating in a four-year leadership training program designed by the Foundation. The plan is that by enabling these students to pursue their academic passions and by cultivating their leadership abilities, they will return to the region to be leaders in their professions and a catalyst for future change. It is our goal that at the end of their experience as Niswonger Scholars, these young people will embody the values most important to the mission of the Foundation: exceptional leadership ability, exemplary personal character, and an abiding commitment to serve others.

Scholar nominations are currently accepted from the following seventeen school districts: Bristol, Elizabethton, Greeneville, Johnson City, Kingsport, Carter County, Cocke County, Greene County, Hamblen County, Hancock County, Hawkins County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Sevier County, Sullivan County, Unicoi County and Washington County.

There are currently 18 Niswonger Scholars studying in 11 different colleges and universities across the United States. This year, there were 93 nominations for the selection of the newest class of five Niswonger Scholars. These included nominations from every public high school in Northeast Tennessee, and from numerous community leaders and organizations. The Scholars' major areas of study include science/pre-medical; business/pre-law; nursing; electrical, automotive and chemical engineering; social work; elementary and mathematics education.

There are 44 Alumni Scholars. Of these, 28 have already begun their careers in their chosen fields. Fourteen of the Alumni are currently in graduate school, with one Alumnus pursuing a second undergraduate degree.

Leadership training is the core of the Niswonger Scholar experience. Our training focuses on four specific areas of personal development – leadership, business management, service, and ethics. *“Developing Community through Service”* was the theme for this year's two formal training experiences. Although training experiences vary each year, one goal is always to introduce the Scholars to the best books, speakers and hands-on training opportunities possible. This year, the Scholars read three texts in preparation for the two training experiences: *The Social Entrepreneur's Handbook* by Rupert Scofield; and two books by Dr. Kent W. Keith: *Anyway*, *The Paradoxical Commandments*, and *Do It Anyway*. *The Social Entrepreneur's Handbook* is a “how to” book on developing an idea into a plan for a successful non-profit agency. The theme of the two books by Kent Keith is finding meaning in adversity and personal happiness in a challenging world. Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, was this year's keynote speaker. Mr. Gandhi's message of *“Lessons I Learned from my Grandfather”* served to reinforce the theme of the readings. In addition to classroom discussion of their textbooks, examples of the week's training included participation in a Community Mapping activity, debriefed by Scott M. Niswonger, Foundation President and Founder; a presentation from Scholar Alumni, Emily Hollingsworth, who is employed with *Show Hope*, a non-profit organization that provides adoption aid and orphan care; and a *Communications 101* class taught by Marilyn DuBrisk, Artist in Residence at Tusculum College, covering topics from elocution to ballroom dancing.

Niswonger Scholars are highly encouraged and financially supported to pursue study abroad opportunities and internship experiences. This year, Scholars chose study abroad experiences in the South Pacific, New Zealand, Italy, Peru, Honduras, and Germany. Companies and organizations involved in internship experiences in our local region included: Eastman Chemical Company, Dentsply International, Inc., Morristown Hamblen Hospital, Office of the Sullivan County District Attorney General, and Niswonger Children's Hospital. Internships were also completed at Milliken Chemical and Textiles, Pendleton, South Carolina; The Learning Generation Initiative, Elkhart, Indiana;



Senior Scholars and Nikki Niswonger in Normandy, France



Freshmen Scholars in the Bahamas

Stone House, Mebane, North Carolina and Genex Cooperative, Inc, Shawano, Wisconsin.

It is our belief that experiences outside the Northeast Tennessee region contribute to the personal and professional development of our Scholars. The Freshmen Scholars were treated to a trip to the Bahamas aboard the “Scott Free,” Mr. Niswonger’s personal boat. The Junior Scholars traveled to New York City as an orientation to everyday life and cultural experiences in a major metropolitan area. Every two years, we provide the opportunity for the Scholars to participate in a service trip to Van Wert, Ohio, hometown of Scott and Nikki Niswonger. This visit includes the opportunity to meet several friends of Mr. and Mrs. Niswonger, enjoy the sites of their beautiful hometown, and to give back to the community as volunteers. In 2012, we proudly added our *Senior Scholars’ Normandy Experience*. With a focus on understanding the personal sacrifices of previous generations and our role as citizens of the world, the senior Scholars stood on the beaches of Normandy on the 65th Anniversary of D-Day. Visits to London and Paris were also highlights of this experience.

Niswonger Scholars are expected to maintain exemplary academic records during their college experience. Additionally, Scholars are strongly encouraged to become actively engaged in leadership experiences on their college campuses through clubs, organizations and service related activities. The Scholars are required to be involved in community service in their campus communities. This year, over 1500 hours of community service were completed by our Niswonger Scholars.

The design of the Scholarship and Leadership program exemplifies the concept of “Learn, Earn and Return.” Throughout the four-year experience, the Scholars are taught the expectation that they will be the next generation to carry out the philosophy of the Niswonger Foundation in Northeast Tennessee.

Current Niswonger Scholars

Freshmen

- Gage Armstrong (University of Tennessee)*
- Nathaniel “Trey” Dodson (Vanderbilt University)*
- Ivory Shelton (Wake Forest University)*
- Matthew Sheppard (Clemson University)*
- Richard Vradenburgh (Tennessee Technological University)*



Scholar Community Service Day

Sophomores

- Jordan Frye (University of Tennessee)*
- Francisco Ochoa-Vargas (Vanderbilt University)*
- Lillie Seal (Lincoln Memorial University)*
- Alex Smyth (East Tennessee State University)*
- Christopher Steadman (University of Tennessee)*

Juniors

- Alex Croghan (Lipscomb University)*
- Yaying Wang (Emory University)*
- Scott White (University of Tennessee)*

Seniors

- Will Brummett (Elon University)*
- Jhmeshia Good (Milligan College)*
- Elizabeth Jones (Clemson University)*
- Jason Light (University of Tennessee)*
- Kayla Williams (University of Tennessee)*

*A biography of each Scholar, as well as our Alumni Scholars, is available on our website at www.niswongerfoundation.org.



Coach Kevin Weston instructs Scholars at Summer Training

The Niswonger Foundation holds a primary focus on the School Partnership and Scholarship and Leadership programs. Each year, however, the Foundation dedicates a portion of our budget to grant making. These awards are provided to not-for-profit agencies or groups with project goals in keeping with the educational mission of the Foundation. These grants allow us to expand our influence further into the region by tapping into the strengths and talents of successful community organizations. The following is only a sample of the programs and activities the Foundation sponsored in the past year.

ARTS IN EDUCATION

The Niswonger Foundation maintains that an appreciation for the arts is of critical importance to becoming a well-educated person. This was the ninth year of our sponsorship of performances of the *Knoxville Symphony Orchestra's* "Young People's Concert" at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center. Each year this concert is attended by more than 2000 students from the region, most of whom have never attended a symphony concert. The students enjoy music and dance by some of Tennessee's most outstanding performers.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

In the belief that: "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it," the Niswonger Foundation provided a grant to the *Tennessee Holocaust Commission* to support four scholarships for Northeast Tennessee teachers to attend the Annual Holocaust Educators' Seminar in Washington, D.C. The focus of this national seminar is to help teachers develop their classroom skills for teaching the significance of this overwhelming tragedy.

STUDENTS AT-RISK FOR HUNGER

The year 2012 marked the sixth year that the Niswonger Foundation has provided funding to the *Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee* for the "Food for Kids" program. Designed to identify students at-risk for hunger and malnutrition, this program provides access to food beyond the school day. The contributions from the Foundation fund this program for Hancock and Greene Counties.

FOCUS ON RURAL EDUCATION

In July, the Niswonger Foundation jointly sponsored the *Southeast Regional Rural Education* Summit with the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), the Rural School and Community



Knoxville Symphony Orchestra's "Young People's Concert"

Trust, and the Ayers Foundation. The goal of this Summit was for educators to gain knowledge and skills to address the pressing issues faced by rural schools. The Summit allowed educators to develop a better understanding of the obstacles rural students face in achieving high school graduation and, further, to pursuing college and career training.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Niswonger Foundation sponsors the *Great Smoky Mountain National Park Institute at Tremont*. This support provides scholarships for selected fourth through sixth grade students to attend this Institute with a focus on environmental education. The Institute also provides workshops for teachers to develop their skills in bringing environmental education to their classrooms.

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

For the seventh year, the Niswonger Foundation has provided funding to support a *Native American Experience* for all 4th graders in the Greeneville City Schools. Students are led through hands-on experiences to allow them to understand the culture of Native Americans. The event and unit of study prior to the event compliment the Tennessee State Standards for social studies.

DICTIONARY PROJECT

The power of words was emphasized to Greeneville City and Greene County School Systems' third graders for the tenth year with the Niswonger Foundation's *Dictionary Project*. In the years of the program, nearly 9000 students have received a personal copy of *A Student's Dictionary*, as well as an introductory class in the use of the dictionary. These dictionaries are designed to meet the Tennessee Department of Education's third grade standards in reading and language arts.

SUPPLIES FOR TEACHING

In support of classroom teachers, the Niswonger Foundation provides a grant to the *Teacher Supply Depot* through the *Greene County Partnership*. With the knowledge that teachers often are placed in the position of spending their personal resources for supplies needed for their classrooms, the Teacher Supply Depot allows the opportunity for educators to select needed classroom supplies free of charge.



Native American History

REGIONAL & STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS & INITIATIVES



Tennessee Teacher of the Year Byron Booker, Knoxville, is joined by Knox County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jim McIntyre (L) and Central High Principal Danny Trent (R)



Scott Niswonger joins Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and others for a recent SCORE discussion.

The Niswonger Foundation is committed to leading the way to educational excellence in Northeast Tennessee. We also desire to use what we learn to improve educational opportunities for all Tennesseans. The following are examples of how we are expanding our influence beyond the region.

RECOGNITION OF TENNESSEE'S OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

The Niswonger Foundation honors the educational professionals who are making an important difference in the lives of children across the State. We have sponsored the Tennessee Teacher of the Year award for the past eight years. Our Foundation recognizes that teaching is both a great honor and an important responsibility. Holding the profession of teaching in the highest esteem, we want to recognize those who exemplify excellence. In this past year, we began our sponsorship of the Tennessee Principal of the Year and the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year, in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education. In addition to the three top awards, numerous other educators are recognized and received awards in each category. These awards highlight the critical importance of effective leadership in building and sustaining quality schools for the State of Tennessee. The Niswonger Foundation provided these educators with nearly \$30,000 in combined cash awards this year.

The following individuals received the top honors in recognition of their examples of excellence:

Tennessee Teacher of the Year - **Byron Booker**, Knoxville
Tennessee Principal of the Year - **Rita White**, Cordova
Tennessee Supervisor of the Year - **B.J. Worthington**, Clarksville

PROSPECTIVE SUPERINTENDENTS' ACADEMY

In partnership with the Tennessee School Boards Association and the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, the Niswonger Foundation created the first academy for prospective superintendents. The Academy's major focus is to provide an intensive course in the skills necessary to be an effective school leader. Candidates for the program are chosen through a competitive selection process. In the six year history of the Academy, more than 70 talented future educational leaders were better prepared to serve Tennessee's schools.

STATEWIDE COLLABORATIVE ON REFORMING EDUCATION (SCORE)

The Niswonger Foundation is a charter member of SCORE, a coalition

of business leaders and educational professionals from across Tennessee and the nation who are committed to improving public education in rural communities. SCORE was established by Dr. Bill Frist. In its third year of effort, SCORE is aggressively pursuing a five-year plan for drastic improvements to our State's educational system. This comprehensive plan is directed to legislators, school board members, system leadership, teachers, parents and community leaders. Scott M. Niswonger serves on the SCORE Executive Committee and is Chairman of the Finance Committee.



Tennessee Principal of the Year Rita White, Cordova

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION eLEARNING INITIATIVE

Following an effective model developed in partnership with Bristol City Schools, the Niswonger Foundation has designed a state-wide program to provide quality, affordable eLearning opportunities for students. Partnering with the State Board of Education, eLearning courses are offered to school systems for their use. Centers for eLearning have been developed in each of the State's grand divisions, with necessary training/support and up to 20 free online courses aligned with Tennessee's learning standards.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Niswonger Foundation is committed to providing Tennessee's school system administrators with the opportunity to upgrade their leadership, management and organizational skills. Partnering with the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS) and the Tennessee Principals Association (TPA), online continuing education is available for superintendents and school principals. Training for local school board members is also available. Courses are easily accessible through our website at www.niswongerfoundation.org.



Tennessee Supervisor of the Year B.J. Worthington, Clarksville

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2011

ASSETS

Restricted Cash	\$ 229,753
Federal Grant Funds Receivable	146,456
i3 Grant Receivable	17,011,756
Investments	9,531,349
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	885
Student Loans Receivable	71,555
Collections	101,861

Total Assets	\$27,093,615
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LIABILITIES

Bank Overdraft	\$ 90,968
Accounts Payable and other Accrued Liabilities	82,425
Line of Credit	230,014
i3 Grant Payable	17,011,756
Demand Notes Payable to Primary Benefactor	588,326

Total Liabilities	\$18,003,489
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NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$ 8,774,660
Temporarily Restricted	315,466

Total Net Assets	\$ 9,090,126
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$27,093,615*
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*The Niswonger Foundation distributed \$4,204,220 to educational programs and scholarship awards in fiscal year 2011.

AN OPERATING FOUNDATION

The Niswonger Foundation was founded by businessman and philanthropist Scott M. Niswonger. Unlike most private foundations, the Niswonger Foundation is not a traditional grant-making foundation. It is an operating foundation with its own programs and projects. Although a percentage of its operating funds go towards grant making, the majority of funds go into the Foundation's two primary programs – a scholarship and leadership program for selected college students and a partnership program for schools.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF

LEARN EARN RETURN

The Niswonger Foundation was established in 2001 to make a positive and sustainable difference in education in Northeast Tennessee. This dream was envisioned by Scott M. Niswonger, majority shareholder of Landair Transport, Inc. and Chairman Emeritus of Forward Air Corporation. These companies, founded by Mr. Niswonger, were the first two Greeneville-based companies to be taken public in the history of Greene County, Tennessee. Jointly, the companies have combined annual revenue of over \$700 million dollars and employ over 4000 people.

With the success of his two companies, the philosophy of “Learn, Earn and Return” was created. Using the innovative model of now having a private, for-profit logistics company, Landair Transport, support a not-for-profit educational foundation, the goal of bringing rigorous, relevant, and cost effective programs to public education became a mission. Fundamental to the success of the Niswonger Foundation has been a clear focus on removing constraints to educational innovation and problem solving, thus allowing local school systems to better provide for student needs. By building school programs that are research-based and sustainable, the Niswonger Foundation has become a recognized voice for educational reform in the State of Tennessee, while nurturing the next generation of leaders.

Here are descriptions of the two programs that are the basis for the Foundation’s work:

The School Partnership program has provided support for over 30 school programs from grades Pre-K to 12. Our partnerships have been designed for the specific challenges of rural education. Recently, this program began to focus on supporting the high schools in our region with a plan for preparing students to be college or career ready. This effort gained national attention resulting in the receipt of an “Investing in Innovation” grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

We know of no other Scholarship and Leadership program like ours in the United States. Niswonger Scholars are selected through

a nomination process that seeks to identify the region’s best and brightest future leaders. They are given the opportunity to attend the college or university that will best prepare them for success in their field of study, while participating in our four-year leadership program. What makes our program unique is that these students commit to returning, within seven years, to Northeast Tennessee to work in their chosen career one year for each year they receive our scholarship. It is our desire that by enabling these students to pursue their academic passion and by cultivating their leadership abilities, they will return to their “roots” and serve.

The Niswonger Foundation expands its philosophy of “Learn, Earn and Return” beyond Northeast Tennessee through involvement in numerous statewide educational initiatives. Examples include our program to provide high quality, affordable e-Learning opportunities; online training courses for school board members; an academy for prospective superintendents; and a partnership with the State Department of Education and the Tennessee Principals Association to offer principals online professional development coursework. The Niswonger Foundation is a charter member of the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education’s (SCORE) Rural Education Network, which is a coalition of leaders from throughout Tennessee and the nation who are committed to improving public education in rural communities. The Niswonger Foundation proudly sponsors the Tennessee Teacher, Principal, and Supervisor of the Year Awards. These leaders then “travel the state” sharing their “best practices.”

And lastly, the Foundation shares a percentage of our operating funds for grants to other not-for-profit agencies for programs that support the Foundation’s mission: *“To create opportunities for individual and community growth through education and other sustainable projects.”*

“And with all your getting, get understanding”

Proverbs 4:7

NISWONGER



FOUNDATION

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