

Raise Your Paddles!

For the past two annual conferences, this has been the new call to action in fundraising for NMEA scholarships. During the boisterous, and ever popular, live auction, the auctioneer will shout out “time to raise your paddles in support of our scholarship fund!” What has ensued these past two years is an eager wave of paddles and bids; no bid is too small or too big. Last year, the paddle raise brought in a whopping \$4,908! This is enough to support up to nine or ten full registrations to the annual conference. This is no small achievement and our generous members should be lauded for their contributions and exuberance.

It’s hard not to get caught up in the moment, and eagerly raise your paddle (or the paddle of a colleague) when the call to action is announced. I encourage everyone to consider how they can contribute, even if only a few dollars. Your dollars combined with a few others can easily add up and become a significant contribution. Joining forces is just one strategy for participation. You can also do a matching bid by announcing that you will match the next bid of \$X, challenging your peers to join the fun. Of course, you can glow in the moment of raising your own paddle to bid your support for scholarships.

Scholarships are an important resource for NMEA membership. It provides access and opportunity for emerging (new) members to enter into our community through a conference or event. It enables participants from far away (international) to reduce the expense of attending an annual conference. And, it can provide support funds for members to attend chapter conferences and other meaningful NMEA-focused events around the country.

Thank you for your past contributions. Scholarship recipients, past and future, thank you as well. As you plan your session submissions and travel to the 2018 annual conference in Long Beach, CA., be sure to think about your strategy for the paddle raise. No matter how you contribute, we strongly encourage you to participate.

Cheers,

NMEA Board

