

# Chicago Engineers' Foundation

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This year marked the 50th anniversary of establishment of the Chicago Engineers' Foundation of the Union League Club (CEF). Since 1963, CEF has excited hundreds of Chicago high school students about opportunities in engineering and encouraged Chicago's young people in their college engineering studies by providing more than \$1 million in CEF's Annual Incentive Awards.

Why does CEF encourage young people to study engineering? Although engineering is made up of an ever-growing number of subfields, (such as industrial engineering, biomedical engineering, electric engineering, and civil engineering), engineers are united by designing ways to improve our communities and our lives. In 1963, the then Chicago Engineers' Club recognized that the complexity of the modern world required a formal, scientific education for engineers. The CEF incentive awards began to encourage the collegiate study of engineering. Fifty years later, the need for engineers in Chicago, in the United States and the world has never been greater and CEF is dedicated to inspiring young students of Chicago to fill that need.

In June 2013, CEF gave \$88,000 to 98 students to encourage and recognize their commitment to major in a field of engineering in college. Recipients, their parents, high school counselors and principals mingled with CEF board members at the Annual Incentive Award Ceremony on June 13 in the Main Lounge at the Union League Club. President and COO of Chicago Tube and Iron Company Dr. Don McNeeley (also a professor at Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering) spoke at the event about how an engineering education teaches not just current technology, but the skills needed to create new technologies and stay on the cutting edge. Students were inspired by Dr. McNeeley's vibrant description of the opportunities in engineering and the many problems which are solved through engineering applications.

During 2013-2014, CEF began its School Outreach Program to excite, encourage and educate Chicago high school students about the opportunities in engineering. Twenty five engineers in the biomedical, structural, industrial, civil and computer engineering fields volunteered to visit 12 Chicago high schools to reach out to interested students. Because

success in engineering requires a strong education focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), we aim to motivate the students, concentrate on those important studies. Our volunteers spoke to more than 400 students at public, private, and charter schools in Chicago. CEF has the longest-standing relationship with Chicago Public Schools of any nonprofit organization.

To expand our outreach to Chicago students, engineers, educators and our supporters, we redesigned our website in 2013 ([www.chicagoengineersfoundation.org](http://www.chicagoengineersfoundation.org)). Students can now apply for the Incentive Awards online. Students will be awarded the 2014 Incentive Awards at a banquet and ceremony at the Union League Club on Tuesday, June 17, 2014.

The ULC Woman's Roundtable generously sponsored our annual Big Easy Speakeasy fundraiser on February 6 in the Main Lounge of the Club. Featuring a silent auction, gaming tables, dinner and drinks, the event was a great party for our supporters. Other fundraisers this year included a reception by the Bow Tie Society and a holiday concert by the Brass Ensemble. We thank all of the member interest groups who have supported CEF.

Breaking recent tradition, we hosted a second major event in honor of our 50th anniversary in September 2013. Our board members and community members were treated to exhibits on the past and future of engineering, film footage of the Wells St. Bridge Restoration Project and displays of landmark buildings and bridges. Provost Alan Cramb of the Illinois Institute of Technology served as the keynote speaker.

At the 50th anniversary, CEF President Nancy Ross announced establishment of the George Sinka Memorial Endowment Fund, which will provide an annual award to a student who shows not only an interest in engineering, but a commitment to community and country.

Born in Budapest in 1930, George Sinka was a part of the fight for Hungarian independence from the Soviet Union, first with a printing press, then as a protester, then as a volunteer soldier. He fled after the war to Aurora, IL, where by hard work alone, he eventually became Vice President of Manufacturing at the Sleepeck Printing Company. Mr. Sinka found an outlet for his civic spirit in the Union League Club. He

is the only person to serve as President of ULC and each of its three foundations. While at CEF, he greatly expanded the donor base, allowing CEF to give awards to our engineering students. Mr. Sinka passed away in 2012. This award was created to reflect his legacy of community service and fiscal responsibility.

The board and supporters of the Engineers' Foundation also mourn the passing in 2013 of Mr. George Dvorak and Mr. Donald Eckmann, two of our directors emeritus and gentlemen who unfailingly and generously supported our mission.

The Chicago Engineers' Foundation is continually grateful to the Union League Members whose donations allow us to realize our mission.

## Our Supporters

The Engineers' Foundation has many steadfast supporters among the Club members and we appreciate you. In particular, we thank Martin and Patricia Jahn, who are committed to the Foundation's mission and generously fund our awards to our college juniors, seniors and graduates.