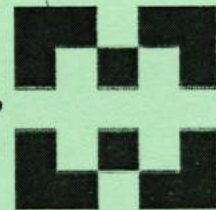




# The Challenger



A Publication of the  
William Rainey Harper College Honors Program

## Globalization: A Definition

by Brian Bellows

Due to its complex nature and its economic implications, globalization does not have one clear definition. According to one source, "Globalization has economic, political and cultural dimensions, all of which can have a social impact" (www.globalization.about.com). This nebulous definition best encompasses globalization; it means a world of difference to those affected by it. To some, globalization is an insidious evil that has undercut American wages by outsourcing jobs to countries which exploit workers and give them little or no benefits. To others, globalization maximizes economic efficiency and provides low-skill workers with jobs.

From the perspective of an economist who is a capitalist, globalization is the equivalent of an absolutely free market. The unfettered market economy is the truest sense of globalization because of its nature. This is what the economist Adam Smith envisioned. The private sector would provide for the needs of the people. Rather than "Big Govern-

ment" providing for the people's needs, the free market can. Without globalization, we would not have the fantastic innovations and conveniences we enjoy at low prices. Globalization is the reason people can buy TV's very cheaply. Producing the screws, glass sheet and cathode ray tube for the television independently would cost several thousands of dollars. The free market helps to fa-

cilitate low prices. As an example, India may produce the screws for the television. Japan would turn out the TV screens in bulk. The cathode ray tube might be manufactured in the United States. All of these parts would then be shipped in bulk to China, optimizing speed and efficiency. This is allocative efficiency at its finest; countries mass produce what they are good at. Everyone is appeased, because

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## Globalization in Japan: Benefits and Losses

by Kuniko Baba

Japanese people have been receiving a lot of benefits from globalization; however, I am concerned that traditional life style, culture and human relationships might be sometimes broken by globalization.

Let me take the successful example of McDonald's. Japanese often eat cheeseburgers and French fries with Cokes at McDonald's all over Japan. Last December, when my son bought a Happy Meal for kids at McDonald's in Tokyo, he was happy to get a new Pokemon toy with a big Pokemon poster. I enjoyed eating a hamburger with special-sauce mushrooms and realized

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March  
2006

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# You Love Globalization

by Tim Ophus

Let me start off by saying that “globalization,” as a term, really confuses me. When someone speaks of “globalization,” he/she may be talking about any number of things (see Brian Belows’ article on page 1). But if there’s one thing I know about globalization, it’s this: it is a word that describes how the world is becoming more and more interconnected and interdependent. Whether you’re talking about culture, economics, politics, or really anything for that matter, you can use globalization in regards to any of them.

For the sake of this article, I’m going to focus on an idea of globalization that is often discussed and easily derided: corporate globalization. This view of globalization focuses on the impact of multinational corporations. You know, how there’s a Wal-Mart in every city on earth, with a McDonald’s next door, and a Starbucks across the street. I find that whenever globalization is brought up casually, this is what is being referenced. So what is your, the reader’s, opinion of this idea of globalization and its implications? I think I know. You love it!

Why do I think you love globalization? I’ll do my best to explain. First, it is certainly true that there are a number of reasons multinational corporations are looked down upon. For one, many feel that they dilute culture itself. By having the same stores in every city on earth, the world becomes more and more the same. If a smaller, traditional “Mom and Pop” store wants to open today, its chances of success are greatly reduced (Wal-Mart really does have unbeatable low prices). And while perhaps this may not be the most pressing of issues, many people feel their societies lose something because of the sameness, the homogeneity, brought about by this impact of globalization.

As for those more pressing issues I just mentioned, there are quite a few. In trying to maximize profits, multinational corporations cut some pretty serious corners. For example, the environment is of little or no concern to them. Producing goods in an environmentally friendly way often involves a cost, and these corpora-

tions have no desire in paying that cost if they don’t have to. While in the short term this may not seem like much, this eventually leads to health problems and an irreversible loss of biodiversity.

Another impact of multinational corporations is on the workers themselves. Most governments look upon these companies favorably and want them to set up shop in their nations. To entice them, labor laws are lax at best. Workers are exploited through very meager paychecks and working conditions that endanger their lives. These companies, whether directly or indirectly, also end up supporting oppressive regimes economically. This only further ties these companies to human rights abuses.

There’s really no getting around it. These companies do some really shady things that aren’t worth defending at all. And I’m sure that you, like me, don’t want to support companies like this. But here’s the kicker: we do! These corporations do the shady things they do to lower their prices and increase sales. And we love that. Without our purchasing power, these corporations can’t thrive.

What are some multinational corporations? McDonald’s, Wal-Mart, Coca-Cola, Exxon, Nike, Pfizer, Halliburton, Disney, Shell, Sony, Apple, Ford, and the list goes on and on. Few of us can honestly say that we haven’t supported globalization, through companies such as these, in some form or another. And it’s because of that fact that these corporations are so powerful.

So there you have it. You, and I as well, love globalization! But I know what you’re thinking. “Hey, I don’t love globalization. I don’t have a choice. And besides, despite the rhetoric I’ve been spoon-fed all my life, I actually

can’t make a difference.” You know what, you may be right. You could potentially find a way not to buy a single thing from a multinational corporation, but it would be nearly impossible. And would it do any good? While it’s true that the world is made up of individuals who could all decide to make that choice with you, there aren’t any signs that they plan on it soon. However, throwing in the towel and following the rest of the world will prove that you really do love globalization. You will still be benefiting from these company’s tactics, and will be just another part of the problem.

So if you or I truly want to be consistent with what we say, if we in fact do not love globalization, then it’s time we prove it. Gandhi once said, “You must be the change you hope to see in the world.” If we are truly angered by the atrocities caused by corporate globalization, we must not benefit from them. We need to work to globalize justice instead, even if we must do it alone.





## Don't Worry, It Won't Turn Out Like "1984." I Promise!

by Chris Poulos

Globalization is sort of like growing up. It's going to happen no matter what, and there is no going back to the past—only Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd get to do that. The question is how is globalization going to be advanced? As the world becomes more connected, many political, social and economic dilemmas arise—"water shortage, postcolonial social wreckage, climate change, the organic composition of capital, fossil fuel depletion, AIDS, nuclear waste, deforestation, white supremacist patriarchal capitalism or its warts to defend itself from its own consequences" (*Full Spectrum Disorder* 3). These dilemmas can be dealt with by free trade and individual governments, or global governance. Ideally, a combination of global governing, individual governments, and, most importantly, the people being affected needs to be used to solve these problems. Nothing is so perfect. There simply needs to be global governance that limits the power of the rich benefiting from free trade; this governance must regulate money distribution.

It is an understatement to say that rich countries, capable of helping poor countries, are not doing enough to help. According to the World Bank, in 2000 the Richest 20% of countries had over 70% of the world's share of income, trade, finance and communication; the poorest 20% had no more than 4%. The rich countries keep getting richer while the poor countries keep getting poorer—how many times have you heard that before? "The distance between the world's richest and poorest country was approximately 3 to 1 in 1820, 11 to 1 in 1913, 35 to 1 in 1950, 72 to 1 in 1992, and 173 to 1 in 2001" (*Introduction to Sociology* 640). Since the richest countries own so much, and since the gaps between rich and poor keep growing, somebody must be doing something to help, right? There have been attempts. For example, a bunch of countries in the UN got together and

tried to supply aid to developing countries by *aiming* to devote 0.7% of their GNP towards overseas development. As of 1998 only four countries reached this goal—the US only devoted only 0.10% (*No-Nonsense Guide* 31). This lackadaisical attitude has led many to believe that free trade is a good thing. If organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) help reduce trade regulations, developing countries will prosper by becoming part of the world market. If the Care Bears headed the WTO I would agree; unfortunately, in reality the WTO is "an undemocratic organization that is dominated by the interests of the world's richest nations—particularly the United States" (*Introduction to Sociology* 640).

Along with global governance comes more strict trade regulations, which limit the power of organizations like the WTO, the World Bank (WB), or the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Since the organizations are dominated by the interests of the richest nations, there is a bias towards what countries get money. This has affected what little money gets tossed into developing countries, because, as a result, the money gets squandered in two ways. First, when private corporations are seen as the only way to increase poor countries' living conditions, the money goes directly to those corporations. The money then is used to benefit the rich people in the country, while the poor remain poor. The WB and IMF know the money gets to the country; however, they do not care how the money is distributed. Second, in order to be favored by the WB and IMF, the country needs to spend foreign aid on industrializing, building capital cities, constructing airports, etc. The country needs to become a place where the WB and IMF will prosper. As a result, developing countries become subservient to the wishes of the WTO—for its facilitation of private companies in their countries—and the WB and IMF simply because they have the money to develop the country.

Developing countries need help defending the right to a decent life. If there is an either-or approach to globalization, either global governance (strict regulation

of trade and strict rules on distribution of money) or free trade (less regulation and private use of money), then I am all for global governance. To this point, private tyranny has created a huge gap between the rich and the poor, which keeps on growing. "Around 1.2 billion people live in direst poverty surviving on less than \$1 a day" (*No-Nonsense Guide* 27). This is



not another menial fact to brush off. The world is collapsing around the privileged few of us who do not need to worry about not eating, not being able to support a family, or losing land and a livelihood. September 11<sup>th</sup> should have been a slap in the face to start regulating trade a little more; unfortunately we were led to believe terrorism is a thing in itself that can be destroyed. Terrorism is not an abstract concept; it happens because monetary policy and privatized tyranny rule globalization. Unless this changes terrorism will not end, and the collapse will catch up to us.



### Globalization: A Definition

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those that labor in the factories which produce these innovations may receive two dollars a day, but when one looks at the conversion rate of that country, two dollars a day frequently lifts these workers from poverty. Ordinarily they would be laboring on a farm, purchasing their own implements and living as subsistence farmers. As opposed to the command and socialist's economic model, the free market will provide for the needs of its people.

A command economy is the antithesis of globalization. By creating tariffs on imports and controlling every intricate facet of the economy, globalization's effects are halted. Market economists believe that this "Big Government" system is the poster child for why globalization is necessary: they contend that a command economy frequently fails to provide for the social good. The bloated government system does not give aid where necessary or anticipate the needs of its people.

The command economist's counterargument is that the private sector will not produce where it cannot reap a profit, even if it is for the social good. There is not much money in helping the homeless or saving the environment, so businesses will not do this unless government steps in to regulate.

Unfettered globalization does not deal with the spillover costs that industries dump upon the land. Economists frequently become caught up in the struggle for economic efficiency, but forget the human toll that is involved. The command economy contends that it takes care of its people and provides for equity and full employment, which globalization quashes. Yet these two economic models are detached from their people.

For steel workers in the rust belt spanning from Iowa to Massachusetts, globalization is a devastating blow that puts their livelihoods in peril. For them, globalization means the outsourcing of their jobs to places that make steel for a fraction of the price. According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, which resides in the heart of America's steel manufacturing area, the United Steelworkers of America is down 50,000 members from ten years ago and continues to decline. Steel workers are not the only ones affected. Automobile plants, ball-bearing manufacturers, and a slew of other manufacturing professions are dwindling because other countries can produce for a fraction of the cost. In the book *The Truth About Globalization*, Doc, a despondent steelworker, comments on the dislocated worker program: "Sometimes we helped them find jobs that only pay \$4 to \$5 an hour with no benefits, but they're happy to

get them. They need somewhere to hang their hats." This desolate picture of America's dwindling steel industry is a stark reality for many workers.

To youth and protesters around the world, globalization is one of the most insidious evils to arise in our times. These protesters are not a single contingent, but a wide array of environmentalists, economists, and human rights advocacy groups. These groups have come under the umbrella of the anti-globalization movement, because globalization has impacted all of these sectors in a negative way. Their definition is different than any economist's definition, because they see the effects of it up close. In their eyes, it has created a homogeneous world lacking in culture (consider the ubiquitous nature of Starbucks), while causing pollution in underdeveloped countries, driving down the real wage of skilled American workers through outsourcing, and exploiting semi-skilled workers. As globalization stretches across continents, it strips countries of their identities. Poorer countries are enslaved, and those that do not have investment potential are ignored completely. Africa is a perfect example: the continent does not attract investors.

True, protesters *have* won

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## Quality Versus Quantity

by Mirja Lorenz

Do you prefer a Tortilla or a Burrito? Sushi or Teriyaki? Peking Duck or a Hot Dog? Oops, is something out of place here? Well, although the Hot Dog is the only traditional American food in my list, all of these goods are equally convenient and affordably accessible in the USA. For some, globalization means the luxury of choice. For others, however, globalization means the stolen choice. These others are not only people in developing, distant countries. Right here, in front of our eyes, many groups of people suffer tremendously from the disadvantages of globalization, for example family farmers. Since our food is grown by farmers, focusing our attention on the grievances of American farming serves our farmers, animals, environment, and finally, us all.

Unfortunately, concerning agriculture, globalization has aggravated adverse trends in the USA. The global market forces traders to steadily increase their productivity. Supermarket chains, for instance, prefer to buy their fruit as cheaply as possible. Sadly, the cheapest deals are often from other countries, where labor, packing, transportation, and marketing are still cheaper than paying local farmers.

Also, big American factory farms can offer less expensive products than small farms, especially with governmental financial assistance. Consequently, they become bigger and richer whereas small family farms can hardly survive. "The food industry is now dominated by a handful of giant corporations which benefit from huge government subsidies and from trade policies that favor large-scale produc-

tion" ([sustainabletable.org](http://sustainabletable.org)).

For example, a dairy farmer wants to sell his milk. Since milk is a perishable product, he cannot wait for a decent offer. Instead, he has to accept the price offered by his distributor, which is often lower than the production cost itself! Small farmers are not driven by greed but by the sheer desire to save their farms while they desperately seek methods to increase their production. Productivity, unfortunately, is measured by quantity, not by quality. I cannot simply blame this farmer when he conforms to the questionable methods of big dairies, like giving cows milk-producing hormones.

According to the Organic Consumer Association, one commonly used hormone is the recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH), which "is banned in every industrialized country in the world - except for the US." This hormone damages the cows' health, increases birth defects in their calves, and "is associated with higher risks for cancer," especially breast, colon, and prostate cancers in humans. Also, when dairy cows are artificially forced to produce about ten times more milk than they naturally would, they become prone to several diseases. Cows in the dairy industry are often "so sick or injured that they are unable to walk." This sad dairy-cow story is not an exception and mirrors the destiny of other victims of "capitalistic farming" as well, such as cattle, laying hens, or pigs.

As mentioned before, family farms have to become more efficient in order to keep up with the market. Therefore, many family farms either give up or become factory farms as well. Unfortunately, the environment suffers extensively from factory

farming. Vast landmasses are exploited: "Forests, wetlands, and other natural ecosystems and wildlife habitats have been decimated and turned into crop and grazing land. Scarce fossil fuels, groundwater, and topsoil resources which took millennium to develop are now disappearing" ([factoryfarming.com](http://factoryfarming.com)). Moreover, the animal's waste, which is around 130 times more than human's waste, contaminates rivers and streams.

Furthermore, transportation of agricultural products effects our environment, unnecessarily wasting scarce fuel for shipping products that can grow in our own gardens. According to Oxfam America, "food travels an average of 1300 miles before it lands in the hands of the consumer."

I am almost at the end of my depressing journey, but I cannot overlook naming some of the health hazards for humans that are based on our poor food-producing practices. Not only are there the production boosting hormones, but also antibiotics, pesticides, and other chemicals, which finally end, obviously, in the consumer, in us. If they affect animals, they most probably have an effect on us as well. For example, antibiotics in food cause bacteria to become resistant. Therefore, numerous yet-unknown bacteria might be able to attack humans unhindered. Furthermore, according to Oxfam America, "900 million pounds of pesticides are used annually by U.S. agriculture, posing threats to human health and

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## Globalization in Japan

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there are more interesting menus in Japanese McDonald's restaurants. Now Japanese people love McDonald's and need it as a part of their lives; they have even nicknamed it "Mack," or "Makudo."

Due to the popularity of McDonald's, similar types of hamburger shops have been established in Japan. One of them, a unique hamburger shop called Mos Burger, created healthy rice burgers with fresh vegetables.

Not only hamburger shops but also pizza delivery service businesses have become popular in Japan, such as Pizza-La and Pizza Hut.

Following the successful fast-food business led by McDonald's, even fast food-types of Japanese restaurants with delivery service have spread successfully. One of children's favorite sushi restaurants, "Kaitenzushi" (rotation sushi in Japanese), shows interesting sushi rotating beside the table and customers can quickly take their favorite one there. This has increased and is very popular among families to save their waiting time.

In this way, the globalization of one business pulls up the performance of many businesses and makes a big effect on the total economy. This is a major advantage of globalization.

There are much more successful Japanese examples of globalization. Like American children, Japanese children's most favorite toy store is Toy-R-Us. Children love to go there because they can choose attractive toys from inexpensive American and Japanese companies.

The first convenience



store in Japan, Seven-Eleven Japan, which remains open for 24 hours, keeps the highest profits among convenience stores. Led by the successful performance of Seven-Eleven, many different convenience stores have appeared all over Japan. The people can choose all kinds of goods from 2,500 different kinds at any time, at a total of 10,000 Seven-Eleven stores throughout Japan.

Last December I was happy to drink my favorite Caramel Macchiato at Starbucks Coffee in Saitama, Ja-

pan, feeling as if I were in Chicago. Japanese people love Starbucks and have nicknamed Starbucks "Sutabaa."

The successful globalization case of Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. was amazing and revolutionary. Nissan replaced its CEO with a French man named Carlos Ghosn. Ghosn electrified the company, which had seen a huge deficit, turning it into a company with high profits by restructuring for a few years. Then the famous global company, Sony Corp., replaced its CEO with Howard Stringer last year.

This next example may not be a perfect embodiment of globalization; however, influenced by the American retail style, huge malls tied up with big supermarkets were built in suburbs. Now people can save time to shop for different kinds of things at one place with a cheaper price. And is one of these malls likely to be very different from the next? No. These malls foster the growth of big business and the extinction of the unique shops.

In this way, people's lives in Japan have become convenient and time-saving as a result of globalization. However, sadly, the effect of globalization could help to break down good human relationships. In my childhood during 1960's and 1970's, every day mothers used to go to each small store to buy meats, vege-

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## Globalization: A Definition

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a slew of rights for poorer countries, ensuring that they are not polluted, and that workers are paid an equitable wage. Now more than ever, students are aware of the worker's plight.

Sadly, however, it remains true that you can go to a Wal-Mart not only anywhere in the United States, but anywhere in the industrialized world. When Wal-Mart moves into an area, local businesses are frequently upset because they cannot compete. At the same time, Wal-Mart does not pay its employees enough to live on in order to live within reasonable means: a "living wage." Not only are wages being driven down and businesses being driven under by these faceless corporate automatons in the United States, in order to keep prices low, nations are also exporting factories and other medium- to low-skilled jobs to countries that have less stringent environmental regulations and lack unions to protect workers.

Numerous gains have been made through protests during the eighties and nineties; Ralph Nadar and his consumer advocacy has helped to procure many rights for people in the United States. However, progress for workers rights, economic reform, and environmental protection has denigrated vastly in the new millennium. The current American governmental administration lets unfettered globalization run rampant, cutting regu-

## Quality Versus Quantity *(Continued from page 5)*

wildlife."

Unfortunately, globalization pulls the focus on the economy and seduces people to seek pseudo-economic growth, ignoring the true costs of production, which include the exploitation of workers, destruction of small businesses, depletion of product diversity, torture of animals, environmental impact, and the damage of our own health, paid, first of all, by non-affluent people, then, by us all, and finally, by our next generations. This is not fair.

Luckily, there are opportunities for each of us to turn the wheel of globalization from its disadvantages towards a sunnier outlook. We, as consumers, can simply insist on quality food instead of cheap quantity products. For example, buying organic food from local farmers doesn't only help our health, the animals, the farmers' financial health, and the environment, but as a reward, we can enjoy better tasting food. Luckily, organic food is on the rise so that nowadays we can find these farmers more easily than in the past. There are organizations such as Slow Food, Heritage Foods USA, and Oxfam America that help small family farms and organic farmers to survive. For example, they develop internet marketing strategies where many small stores share one online catalog.

Finally, some enthusiastic family farmers have managed to unite in order to advocate "fair food" in our immediate neighborhood. If globalization means uniting the countries of the earth in one global village, then maybe we should start to restore our regional villages first, preparing for a healthy global village.

lations and fighting against worker and consumer rights with a fervent intensity not seen since the Reagan years. The current administration has passed legislation that crippled the Endangered Species Act as of late. (This permits mega-business to sprawl into formerly protected land.) In almost all instances, it has fought to cut regulations for sewage, drinking water, and energy pollution. Clearly protesters are losing the fight against globalization as it spreads across the world.

These opponents of globalization are fighting the definition that is real to them, the same definition that many American professions are fighting. To them, globalization means the loss of jobs, the exportation of industries to other countries, and the exploitation of the worker on all ends of the spectrum and across continental divides. After purveying an array of different perspectives, it becomes apparent that globalization is an amorphous idea that takes shape in the eye of the beholder. Its meaning is contingent on



tables, fish, tofu, etc. with their shopping baskets. They enjoyed conversations with shop owners and neighbors and we kids grew up with them. In those years, I felt time passed slowly. But now working mothers have increased and fast foods and supermarkets help them to save cooking and eating time. As a result, kids who often eat fast foods and drink soda are fat and tend to be easily emotional on a lack of balanced nutrition. Furthermore, junior high school or senior high school students often go to convenience stores, staying there until late at night. They have become unhealthy both mentally and physically.

Besides the concerns about a change in traditional life style and human relationships, the other important concern is that our traditional culture may have been polluted by globalization. Kyoto, one of the most beautiful cities in Japan, is able to keep a lot of old shrines and temples, built more than several hundred years ago. However, Japanese people themselves do not realize how much a McDonald's restaurant built next to a sublime temple spoils the traditional atmosphere, and yet such incongruity does exist throughout Kyoto.

Globalization has given us convenient life and sufficient time, but in exchange, we are losing some important life value. Now it is time to consider what is healthy, and we should make efforts to keep healthy human relationships and traditional culture.

#### Sources used for Chris Poulos' "Don't Worry..."

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- Goff, Stan. *Full Spectrum Disorder*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2004.

#### Spring, 2006 Honor Society Meetings:

All meetings take place on Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 PM until 5:00 PM. We meet in room L 329.

Wednesday, Mar. 8: *Tough Guise* (a film documentary).

Wednesday, Mar. 15: *Skepticism and Pseudoscience*: the difference between science and scientific-sounding claims, the fallacies within any number of hoax-like and the way knowledge is discovered through scientific and logical inquiry. Faculty guest: professor Josh Sunderbruch

Wednesday, Mar. 22: *Controversies in Psychology*: drug treatments, Freud v. Maslow, and more. Faculty guest: Professor Charlie Johnston.

Wednesday, Mar. 29: *Spring Break* (no Honors Society meeting).

Wednesday, April 5: *Issues in Political Science*: What does it mean to be a Republican? A Democrat? Is there a genuine difference? How have these distinctions been formed? Faculty guest: Professor Bobby Summers.

Wednesday, April 12: *Killing Us Softly* (a film documentary).

Wednesday, April 19: *Controversies in Art*. Faculty guests: Professors Perry Pollock and Stephany Rimland.

Wednesday, April 26: *Controversies in Anthropology*. Faculty guest: Helmut Publ.

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Harper College administration, faculty, or staff.

A publication of the William Rainey Harper College Honors Program

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#### Do you live in Schaumburg or Hoffman Estates?

You may be eligible for the Uncle Joe Lesniak "Service above Self" academic scholarship or the Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates Rotary Club Transfer Scholarship. Please contact Mr. Wilson or Cathy Huxhold (847-925-6116; chuxhold@harpercollege.edu) for details. Or visit [schaumburgrotary.com](http://schaumburgrotary.com) and click the "scholarship" link.