

St. Louis Park Parktacular Ambassador Scholarship Program

The St. Louis Park Parktacular Ambassador Scholarship Program is currently accepting candidates for this year's young adult Ambassadors. The following information may help you decide if this program is right for you.

What is the St. Louis Park Parktacular Ambassador Program?

The St. Louis Park Parktacular Ambassador Program selects up to three young adult ambassadors, two senior ambassadors, and up to four junior ambassadors to represent and promote the St. Louis Park Parktacular Festival, the City of St. Louis Park and the Children First Initiative during the Parktacular Festival and throughout the year. The Ambassadors do so by appearing at community festivals and celebrations, such as parades, coronations, and luncheons, throughout the Twin Cities metro area, out-state Minnesota and western Wisconsin. In addition, the St. Louis Park Parktacular Ambassadors serve as community volunteers with local non-profit organizations.

The program is part of the St. Louis Park Parktacular Festival and is run by volunteers. It is the desire of the Parktacular Festival Board and Ambassador Program Directors to give each candidate the best experience possible, no matter what the outcome of the final ambassador selection may be.

Who can participate as a Young Adult Ambassador Candidate?

Young men and women ages 17-22 by July 15th may be candidates. They must be at least a senior in high school by fall of the current year, unmarried, and have no dependents. They must live or attend school full time in St. Louis Park. Individuals who are still 16 and entering their senior year of high school this fall may also participate. College students who have graduated from a secondary school in St. Louis Park are also welcome. These individuals do not need to reside in St. Louis Park. Current students must have a minimum 2.0 GPA.

How do I become a candidate?

Anyone who meets the qualifications and submits an application will automatically become a candidate. All candidates should be advised that they are expected to act with discretion for the duration of their candidacy. Also, we ask that you review your social media accounts and be aware that the judges will review them as well.

How much does it cost?

There are no fees to be considered. Candidates will be provided with a Parktacular t-shirt and

candidate sash. Candidates are expected to provide the following wardrobe items:

- White dress shirt
- Black dress slacks (no yoga pants, leggings or knit pants)
- Khaki shorts (length should be no more than 2" above the knee)
- Black, flat dress shoes

Those who are selected as Ambassadors are provided with a wardrobe and all fees for participating are paid for by the program. However, many families do decide to purchase coordinating outfits for certain events. These costs are absorbed by each family. Examples include matching cowboy shirts for western themed parades or costumes for the Anoka Halloween parade. We also coordinate an overnight at a hotel with a parade during September or October. This event, while not required, is a highlight of the year and the costs are borne by each family.

What are the benefits of the Ambassador program?

You will be given the opportunity to gain poise, self-confidence, leadership skills, social skills, and meet many new members of your community. In addition, there will be many fun-filled activities for you to participate in as a candidate.

How are the Ambassadors selected?

Judges will choose the candidates they feel will do the best job of representing the community for the coming year. Many of these individuals are involved with other communities and have experience in working with ambassadors. They will consider personality, speaking ability, maturity, grooming, poise, confidence, and a willingness to commit to the program and its scheduled activities. They will also consider the ability of the candidates to work together as a team and how they interact with the Senior and Junior Ambassadors. **This is not a beauty, talent, nor popularity contest nor is it a pageant.** All positions are selected on a gender-blind basis.

How does the selection process take place?

Candidates are judged at different events. They may include candidate activities such as:

Meet the Candidate: Each candidate dresses in an outfit of their own choosing that represents something about themselves (hobby, sport, career goals, etc.) and introduces themselves to the judges. During this time, they explain their wardrobe and how it describes them. Each person usually speaks for about 2 minutes. This is event, while open to the public, is usually attended by parents and friends.

Personal Interview: Each candidate will be individually interviewed by the panel of judges. This is the most important part of the judging process. Some questions may originate from your application, while other questions may be formulated by the judges to evaluate your understanding of your community, your commitment to the program, and your ability to speak spontaneously.

Parade: Judges are given the option of attending the Parktacular parade. During the parade, the candidates are judged on their interaction with each other as well as the parade goers.

Coronation:

1. Each candidate will introduce themselves to the audience, showing their ability to communicate to a large group with confidence.
2. Each group of candidates participates in an activity selected by the outgoing ambassadors. This may be a dance, question, etc.
3. The final part of the judging is the formal question. The question is usually selected by the judges from a list of questions provided by the outgoing Ambassadors. Each candidate will be asked the same question. Candidates are sequestered out of earshot until it is their turn to answer the question. Candidates wear formal gowns/suits/tuxedos for this part of the coronation.
4. Throughout the coronation, the judges will be looking at posture, poise, and presentation, as well as how the candidate handles unrehearsed situations.

How much time commitment is expected of the new Ambassadors?

Ambassadors are expected to make their appearance schedule a priority. Some flexibility will be allowed for school and work, but most events are planned around the events listed in the St. Louis Park Community and School Calendar. We have found that most employers are very proud to have an ambassador as an employee and are quite willing to work around their schedules as events are usually scheduled more than two weeks in advance. ***Attendance and punctuality are important and will determine the award of the scholarship at the end of the term.***

Many of the summer appearances occur on weekends and evenings. There are activities during the school year, but education is a priority and events are scheduled to avoid any known school activities, if possible. Most activities from September to May occur on weekends.

You may anticipate approximately 70-80 appearances during the year. These appearances will be in the form of parades, coronations, receptions, fundraisers, community events and community service. In addition, we will be joining ambassadors from other communities for dances, caroling, visiting senior residences, etc.

What awards/prizes are given?

At the end of their reign, provided all requirements have been fulfilled, each Ambassador will receive a scholarship for their participation. Most Congenial will also receive a plaque presented at the coronation.

In addition, each Ambassador will receive the following wardrobe items. These items are theirs to keep after they have successfully completed their Ambassador year:

- A crown/scepter
- Sash
- Embroidered polo shirt
- Business attire
- Semi-formal outfit

- Formal outfit (dress or suit)
- Accessories
- Duffel bag

Ambassadors will be provided, on a loan basis, the following:

- Cape (females only)
- Winter coat
- Winter hat, scarf, gloves, mittens, and pants
- Apparel necessary for certain activities

How much commitment has to come from my parents?

Most parents or guardians are excited to have their child selected as an Ambassador and are expected to participate equally with their child. Sometimes another family member over the age of 21 can stand in for the Ambassador's parent or guardian.

Our program is run by volunteers and help is always needed. St. Louis Park Parktacular uses a 30-foot float for parades and help is required to set up/take down and tow the trailer. Parents usually love going to the parades and many volunteer to help by providing water at the parades, taking pictures, improving/repairing the float, chaperoning at events, and sewing wardrobes. While their children are becoming friends with the other Ambassadors, many parents enjoy the company of the other parents and the Ambassador family continues to grow stronger through these connections.

Why do young adults become candidates?

Lots of reasons!

"I need scholarship money"

"It looks like a lot of fun"

"My friend did it"

"I'm proud of my community and I want to tell others about it"

"I love being around little kids and meeting new people"

Whatever the reason, we welcome you as a candidate.

Applications may be downloaded from the Parktacular website, <http://parktacular.org/ambassadors/>. After completing and turning in your application, you will be asked to attend an information meeting. For candidates that are 17 and under, we ask that a parent or guardian attend this information meeting as well.

For additional information or questions, please email us at slpambassadors@gmail.com.