



Open seas for the success of young people from the borderline islands

The swimming team supporting the ExcellenSeas scholarship program swims again this year, in order to enhance knowledge in the borderline islands of the North and South Aegean Regions with total population of less than 2,000 inhabitants! We will award scholarships to excellent students from our borderline islands, in order to support their university studies.

The ExcellenSeas program begun as an initiative of the Pastra Cretonaxiosa offshore swimming team. The members of the team, while swimming long distances in various areas of the Greek seas and communicating with the local communities, have gained a direct perception of the special conditions and needs of the small remote islands of our country. For this reason, the team set as a goal of its swimming excursions to raise public awareness and raise funds, in order to provide financial support in the form of scholarships for students coming from these islands. Further, the team's swimming missions have been taking place under the auspices of HE the Presidency of the Hellenic Republic. Pastra Cretonaxiosa continues to contribute significantly to the program in order to raise awareness and expand the community, with an inspiring level of symbolism that highlights the great difficulties the inhabitants of such small borderline islands have to face. At the same time, the team points out that no difficulty is insurmountable and with its

energy being inexhaustible, swims across interesting and sometimes inaccessible sea passages as a human chain. The team will swim, again this year, sea crossings that will be a surprise and a challenge for each of us who love the sea and we are sure that, as always, we will emerge as winners from the wildness of the sea and the untold difficulty of the cold waters.

Starting in 2018, with the award of a scholarship to the only graduate of the High School of St Stratis island, the initiative evolved into a program supported by a wide range of companies and organizations, including Hellenic Petroleum (ELPE), Eugenia Giannini and Associates Law Firm, Athens International Airport, Grant Thornton, Aegean, ANT1, Holmes Place, Attica Group, Ertif Verwaltung Photovoltaics Ltd, Boston Consulting Group, MGCode, Sofren N.Y. These organizations and companies support the operation of the program and also undertake the particular scholarships for one or all of the scholars' years of studies.

The vision of the ExcellenSeas program is the development of the local communities in the borderline islands through the academic and professional progress of the young people of these islands. In particular, the aim of our initiative is to reward and support excellent students in these islands, who have been accepted to universities, but need support to meet the financial needs of their studies. Thus, through targeted financial support and advisory guidance, under the auspices of the Scientific Committee of the program, we award scholarships that cover the entire range of university studies. The program also provides to the scholars the opportunity to participate in short-term internships in order to gain professional experience, depending on their respective scientific field.

The Scientific Committee of ExcellenSeas is staffed by Professors of Greek and foreign Universities, as well as by

personalities distinguished for their ethics and high academic and professional level. The key task of the Committee is the selection of scholarship holders and the close monitoring of their academic development. In addition, task of the Committee is also the provision of valuable consulting work in the next stage for the students' lives, that towards their professional rehabilitation. The program also provides internship opportunities to the scholars, so that they gain professional experience, depending on their respective field of study.

In addition, by providing the necessary financial resources and ongoing consulting support to the students, we hope to create a dynamic alumni community, who will act as catalysts for social progress and development for their islands of origin and as success advisors for future recipients of scholarships provided by ExcellenSeas.

In addition to the scholarship we awarded in 2018, ExcellenSeas has already awarded eight more scholarships in 2019, to students from Astypalea, Kastelorizo, Meganisi, St Stratis, Nisyros and Fournoi, who are currently studying at several university faculties of our country's Universities. The support that scholarship recipients have received at both the advisory and financial levels - especially given the economic impact of the recent pandemic - is a key driver of their academic progress.

Our goal is to continue effectively this year as well. Help our purpose too by supporting a student yourselves! Strengthen the staff of our alumni community!

For more information on the scholarship initiative and framework under which our scholarships are provided, visit our website following the link: www.excellenseas.org .