

Right of Way International Education Foundation (RWIEF)

BY CAROL CROFT, SR/WA

Since 1976, the Right of Way International Education Foundation (RWIEF) has supported IRWA, ensuring that members receive unparalleled education, new courses, training programs and the necessary resources to thrive in the ever-evolving right of way industry.

Upon recognizing that continuing education and professional development are essential to the growth and advancement of our profession, the RWIEF's primary goal has always been to fund right of way education initiatives. Throughout the year, the Foundation brings forth innovative ideas focused on generating financial contributions.

There are countless ways to contribute to our cause. You can include a donation with your IRWA membership renewal, collect funds through your Chapter, donate an item to the annual auction or even support the annual golf tournament. Any level of support can make a great difference.

Begin to look at the RWIEF as your savings account for education. Now, let's talk about the Foundation's deep commitment to this cause.

What is this cause called?

We are the Right of Way International Education Foundation. It is a vibrant cause, supported by a Board of Trustees that believes in the volunteer spirit and mission of the Foundation. We also have a Board of leaders that is strong, innovative and passionate about their position of service. RWIEF is a group that believes in the mission of raising funds to further great education initiatives within the right of way profession.

Is this cause contagious?

Yes! It is spreading across an international spectrum.

Can you kill this cause?

I don't think so. It's been around since 1976 and continues to grow and strengthen.

What does this cause do for you?

It provides a secure place for donations to be held over time to support development of innovative education programming.

What makes this cause so vibrant?

It's all thanks to the passion of leaders who have served it in the past like Tom Benson, Alicia Worthy, Jim Finnigan, John Benson, Bill Milton and Jeff Triplett. These pioneers helped pave the way and strengthened the cause with more transparency, options and specialization for those seeking knowledge.

What's the cause doing now?

RWIEF is advancing the worth of individuals. Just look at Smedemore Bernard, Carlos Obando, Julie McDonald, Shellie Finan, Leesa Love and 35 others who availed themselves of the Forty for Forty Scholarship Program, as well as other scholarship programs and courses funded by the Foundation. These individuals were uplifted with greater wisdom and understanding of their profession.





What keeps the cause growing?

The Foundation thrives because of the volunteer spirit to work for a cause that is greater than one's self. Strong leaders serve as Trustees and constantly support the cause, such as David Sinclair, Clyde Johnson, Craig Poorker, Leslie Finnigan, Ron Barker, Bernie Lea, Mike Pattison, Kevin Winner, Angel Banks, Gina Anthony, Lara Bailey, Joe Neighbors and Aimie Mims.

If the RWIEF is that old, how does the cause survive?

The Foundation obtains new life blood and spirit annually from young volunteers like Taylor Sass, Brett Farner, Kasy Baldauf, Carmelita Delgado and Kelly Simmons. These leaders are called YPs and serve a three-year term as a full Trustee. Most importantly, the cause continues to have strong support from donors that believe in these principles.

If the cause is that good, can I get involved?

Certainly! It is available for all that wish to partake. Attend the International Right of Way Association's Annual Conference. Visit the Foundation's booth at the Exhibit Hall. Introduce yourself to the Trustees and learn how to engage yourself in the fruits of this cause. Play golf at the Annual Golf Tournament. Network at the Monday Night Event. You will be uplifted with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose in your work.

What does the future hold for the RWIEF?

The future is very bright. The ability to fund education programming is supported by the generosity of those in the right of way profession. Having a 501 (c) 3 structure, donations to the RWIEF are tax deductible. With a corpus of approximately 1.6 million dollars, the Foundation can fund any education initiative that furthers the right of way profession.

Where is the cause going?

Future stops are Minneapolis, San Antonio and Cleveland. Foundation Trustees will be at IRWA Region Forums and Chapter meetings through the year. They are available to speak to any group interested in the Foundation's mission and promoting the cause. The fruits of the Foundation are there for all right of way professionals.

We can always look back and learn from history, but to move forward, we must look forward. The Trustees of the Right of Way International Education Foundation are always there to help and are always looking forward!



Carol A. Croft, SR/WA is a principal in Croft & Associates and has over 30 years of experience in right of way appraisal and acquisition work. She has been an active member of the IRWA since 1979. In service to the Tennessee Chapter, she has held numerous committee and officer positions including President and Director. Carol has served as Region 6 Vice Chair and Chairperson, and was awarded the Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award in 2000. She is currently the President of the Right of Way International Educational Foundation.