

## NHI Great Debate Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

**Q:** *My child is very shy and doesn't like to speak in front of people? Is this program for him/her? I know he/she won't like it.*

A: Most certainly! The Great Debate's focus is the power of communications. Therefore, public speaking is only one of the many areas of training which include critical thinking, advanced persuasive writing, and team building just to name a few. By participating in the program your child will become more articulate, creative, and confident in sharing their ideas. The debates themselves are conducted with an opponent and a judge. Studies have shown us that the Great Debate experience also has a positive impact on their verbal scores in standardized exams. A highly trained staff works with students who are not comfortable in large group setting to students who are already versed in public speaking.

**Q:** *My child is already in UI/ speech and debate/mock trial in school. Why does he/she need this program? What will he/she learn in this that he/she isn't already learning there?*

A: These events focus on highly research based topics or require students to perform published works. At the Great Debate, students are required to be creative and use fresh ideas and their own words to tackle tough questions about the future. Also, NHI topics are culturally relevant to participants by asking participants, as future leaders, to create solutions and programs for the Latino community of the future. Instead of looking to books and websites, we encourage the students to talk to you and their community for information.

**Q:** *Isn't this program for students who want to become lawyers or politicians? My child wants to enter medicine, engineering or a scientific field. What does he/she have to gain from this program?*

A: While many NHI alumni have gone into the legal and political sector, just as many have become professors, artists, doctors, and engineers. As we live in the "Communications Era," having the ability to think on your feet, create new ideas, and make a sound case for your opinions not only has benefits inside the court room but in obtaining funding for medical research, seeking out investors for new technology, and convincing publishers to promote your book. Overall, the experience prepares anyone to be a leader in any field, position, or community.

**Q:** *About this tuition, what does this cover? Why that amount?*

A: NHI tuitions are evaluated and set every year by staff executives and the Board of Trustees. Much like a university, the "cost of education" is higher than the tuition. Through private initiatives and university partnerships NHI is able to offer

a reasonable tuition that includes the official t-shirt, personal training, curriculum at 1/3 the actual costs.

**Q:** *Do we have to come up with that tuition right now?*

A: No, at this time all that is required is the \$20 application (due 10/31/12) which is part of the total tuition. Once your child is accepted they are given over a month to send in their total tuition. Work closely with your Project Administrator of NHI rep to stay in contact with us about payment and financing options.

**Q:** *What if we can't afford the tuition? Are there payment plans? How about financial assistance?*

A: The first step is to pursue sponsorship through local businesses, community organizations, including family and friends. The majority of NHI participants get some financial support from local sponsors. In fact, upon being accepted, your child will receive a sponsorship letter from NHI's president that they can use to help them. Finally, remain in communication with the NHI Rep who will be able to speak with you individually about payment and financing options.

**Q:** *How about transportation to and from the Great Debate? Are we responsible for getting our child there?*

A: Transportation is not included in the tuition fee. Although, because Great Debate is a team program, transportation is often sponsored by local donors, school districts, or carpools are scheduled months in advance. Your local Project Administrator will be able to give your family specifics of how your local team arrives.

**Q:** *When and where are training conducted? Who conducts the training?*

A: Ideally NHI and local projects seek out the support of local universities and colleges to lend facilities for training. In many areas this is the case. In other areas, local training is conducted at local businesses, community organizations, or high schools. Our policy states that a parent and adult trainer is to always be present for these sessions.

**Q:** *How can we be assured that our child will be safe?*

A: The Institute's top priority is ensuring the safety, health and well-being of its participants. NHI mobilizes a team of certified and trained staff and alumni who manage the Great Debate round the clock. In addition, each local team is asked to bring a corps of volunteers and parent chaperones. Finally, university security and police departments are briefed and maintain close watch over NHI activities while on campus.

For more information visit <http://www.nhi-net.org>. Contact us at [info@nhimail.com](mailto:info@nhimail.com) or (512) 357-6137.

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**Q:** *We hear about the bulk of the training being done by other high school students, how are we assured of the quality of training?*

A: Like many educators will tell you, peer to peer learning is one of the most effective ways to teach students. NHI shares a similar philosophy in that the organization sets out to give youth the opportunity to be in leadership roles early on. Yet, all training is coordinated and managed by the local Project Administrator and head training staff which are comprised of Great Debate alumni college students. In addition, local Project Administrators are annually certified by NHI and coordinate their training with NHI's headquarters in Maxwell, Texas.

**Q:** *How will this help our child with getting into college?*

A: Most recruiters will tell you that they look for students who will be active members of their university community. Leadership is one of the main traits they seek out. In addition, by participating in the Great Debate your child becomes a lifetime member of NHI which provides your family direct access to the Institute's College Register (www.nhicr.org) a 100+ member organization of partner universities. Also, Great Debate skills come in handy in college and financial aid interviews, essay writing, and seeking out letters of recommendation. Several institutions have created partner scholarships specifically for NHI students. 98% of all NHIers attend college and 67%+ attend graduate studies.

**Q:** *What is there for my child after he completes this program? Are there other programs for sophomores and juniors? How about opportunities to volunteer?*

A: We always remind our families that NHI is not a "one shot deal". NHI has opportunities for leadership development from 9<sup>th</sup> grade into college. The LDZ, NHI's flagship program, is available to sophomores and juniors. NHI programs demand the involvement of volunteers from across the nation. After completing Great Debate, your child will be invited every year to volunteer as a trainer and program manager locally and nationally. Volunteer opportunities are endless and extend beyond college.

**Q:** *My child's GPA is below 3.0, does he/she still have a chance of being accepted into the program?*

A: Yes, there is! Your child will be given probationary acceptance and asked to send a new report card at the end of the quarter. Also, you are asked to visit closely with the area NHI Rep who will be available meet with your family face to face.

**Q:** *What if my child can't attend every training meeting?*

A: Ideally, we strive for 100% participation. Yet, we know that bright children like your child are involved in a wide range of activities. Touch base with your local Project Administrator who will be able to coordinate with your family individually about alternate training times.

**Q:** *Where are the Great Debates held?*

A: NHI Great Debate programs are held on in multiple states. For dates and exact locations visit [www.nhi-net.org](http://www.nhi-net.org).

**Q:** *Where is NHI located?*

A: NHI's headquarters are located on a 46-acre ranch in a small community called Maxwell in Central Texas. The "ranch" is home to an old 100-year old Victorian mansion that is the home to our alumni center and museum. Our staff operates out of Esther Hall and behind the tree line is a retreat homestead for training sessions and guests. Maxwell is about 35 miles south of Austin and about 50 miles north of San Antonio.

**Q:** *Who funds NHI's work?*

A: NHI is a Texas private nonprofit corporation established in 1979. NHI is not grant dependent and instead marshals resources from local communities and alumni for support. NHI rarely receives any support from public entities but does work closely with school leaders to help offset family tuition costs. Talk to your local school board or principal about a partial sponsorship for your child.

**Q:** *What is "Celebracion"? How does my child qualify?*

A: Celebración is the annual NHI gathering of top award recipients, alumni, and outstanding participants nominated by the organization's summer Education Directors. Over 1,000 top youth participants and several hundred alumni gather for 4 days in the fall for a global conference of exchanging ideas, elevating the competition, and showcasing the community's top talent.

**Q:** *How do I get a family member or neighboring school/community involved??*

A: NHI has grown significantly from a small cohort of 90 students in Austin, Texas in 1981. We are always happy to connect with community leaders, parents, and school leadership groups that want to nominate their youth to participate. Our goal is to provide the future community with a highly developed cohort of talent – we are happy to expand our services to new communities.

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