

## **How E-D-U-C-A-T-I-O-N Spells P.E.O.**

While reflecting on the subject of education, I allowed myself to think about the opportunity to learn as related to P.E.O. Immediately, a host of words entered my thoughts, and I was surrounded by a warm, proud, caring feeling that is always generated by thinking of my P.E.O. sisters. I decided then to take each letter in the word "education" and apply it to the uniqueness of our sisterhood.

E: E's a cinch. What else could E stand for but ELF? I'll wager we're the only organization in the country where images of a little green imp implies education for all. We have several educational opportunities available. Our Program for Continuing Education, founded in 1973, is designed to meet the needs of mature women desiring to continue their education to enable them to meet their changing roles in society. Our Peace Scholarship Fund was established in 1949 to provide grants to women in the U.S. and Canada for purposeful educational goals. Our P.E.O. Educational Fund was set up in 1907 to enable women to further their education beyond high school. This fund is a low interest, revolving loan. The latest P.E.O. project is Scholar Awards. Since 1991 the sisterhood has awarded substantial grants to help outstanding women pursuing postgraduate degrees.

D: D is for daisy, so similar to our marguerite, one of our beloved symbols. Why does this lovely flower symbolize our sisterhood? According to an article in the July-August 1988 issue of THE P.E.O. RECORD, P.E.O. sisters are like the perennials-everlasting, blooming and shining even without the attention of others. Perennials take rough conditions in stride and still offer lovely blossoms. P.E.O. sisters take what life offers them and contribute generously to life in return.

U: U stands for understanding. What other organization surrounds its members with as much love and concern as P.E.O.? To be understanding is to show sympathy and tolerance, but more importantly to be understanding is to appreciate the unique personality of each sister.

C: C stands for Cottey College where P.E.O. love, concern, and respect for education are manifested daily. Cottey is a two-year college for women, owned and supported by P.E.O. since 1927. Cottey offers 350 students an excellent academic program on a lovely campus in Nevada, Missouri. Because of the support of the P.E.O. sisterhood, Cottey is able to offer an excellent education at a moderate cost. Cottey's philosophy is well expressed in an article of the February 1989 issue of THE P.E.O. RECORD. "At Cottey we believe that young women of high ability and motivation should not be denied the advantages of a private education because they cannot afford to pay for it. That is why we keep our costs low and offer such a wide range of assistance. As other colleges and universities increase their costs dramatically, Cottey will become even more attractive to young women seeking a quality education at a price they can afford."

A: A stands for aims from our Objects and Aims. This is the creed of our sisterhood. As we recite together these words, we are reaffirming our common goals and pledging always, a loving concern for each sister.

T: T stands for together. Together in spirit, even when we're apart. We're always together in each other's thoughts, and we rally around each other to share joys, sorrows, and even comfortable silences.

I: I stands for inspired. God is ever present among us, and I feel that our sisterhood and its projects are always held in the loving, faithful hands of our heavenly Father.

O: O stands for opening ode--"We who are sisters". We sing together about our heritage, our hopes, and our bonds. We recognize the virtues represented by the five points of our star, and we thank God for His protection.

N: N stands for never alone. We are truly sisters in heart and spirit. Throughout our land we have thousands of sisters. We matter to each other, and we cherish the bonds that tie us together. Our esteem for education is continuous as we strive to love and support each other. We show our love to others through our educational projects. We offer sisters, daughters, mothers, and grandmothers the opportunity to pursue their own star.

Source: Nancy Labahn, B, UT, 1994.