

Central Region students earn DCFS college scholarships

Most students head to college with the basic supplies, including books, clothes and a calculator. But some students whose cases are handled in Central Region had a send off that included paid tuition and academic fees at any of the participating Illinois universities and junior colleges, a monthly stipend of \$458 and a medical card for up to four years. The recipients of the 2006 DCFS Scholarship were selected from 218 worthy applicants. Based on their record of academic achievement, their community involvement and personal successes, the young scholars featured below can now focus on their new path toward a college degree.



ANA BANDA

Ana, of Arenzville, is a 2006 graduate of Beardstown High School where she earned a 3.25 grade point average on a 4.0 system. She was an honor roll student and was recognized as a student of the month during her senior year. Ana's high school activities included soccer, Kiwanis Club, Art Club, Future Business Leader's Club, softball, Student Council, and Future Homemaker's of America. She has worked at Burris Seed Farms and at Liberty Wholesale County Market. Ana has volunteered as a Spanish translator at Saint Francis Community Clinic and participates in her church choir and band. She is now a student at Western Illinois University, majoring in elementary education. Her career goal is to be a teacher.



ROBERT BARKULIS

Robert is a 2006 graduate of Bloomington High School where he earned a 3.88 grade point average on a 5.0 system. He was ranked 113th in his class of 313, was an Honor Roll student each year and was named as a Big 12 Conference Scholar Athlete. He has worked as a lifeguard and for Weed Man Lawn, a lawn treatment

company. Robert's high school activities included basketball, the school musical, Pep Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and four years on the track & field and cross-country teams. He now studies at Illinois State University and is a student athlete.



STACY BOECK

Stacy graduated from Normal Community High School in 2006. She earned a 3.89 grade point average on a 5.0 system. Her high school activities included the German Club and the Drama Club. She participated as an actor, stage manager, and director in 15 productions. Stacy was inducted into the International Thespian Troupe in 2004. Her employment experience included Illinois State University Dining Services, Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois, and East Bay Camp and Resort. Her volunteer experiences included American Red Cross, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, the McLean County AIDS Task Force, and activities with her church. Stacy plans to attend Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and major in psychology. Her career goal is to be a criminal psychologist.

Scholarship recipients, con't.

MELANIE HARRISON

Melanie, of Sherman, is a 2005 graduate of Williamsville High School where she earned a 3.33 grade point average on a 4.0 system and was on the High Honor Roll. Her high school activities included the Beta Club and yearbook staff. Melanie has extensive volunteer experience with her church involving food drives, nursing home visits, and vacation bible school. She has worked at the Village Market and at McDonalds. She is currently in her second year at Lincoln Land Community College, where she has earned a 3.2 grade point average on a 4.0 system. She is majoring in electrical engineering and mathematics.

CANDACE LYNETTE HOSIER

Candace is a 2006 graduate of Champaign Central High School where she earned a 4.54 grade point average on a 5.0 system. She scored 26 on her ACT and was ranked 46th in her class of 291. Academic honors included the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society. Her high school activities included Quill and Scroll, President of Spanish Club, school newspaper, and ballet. Her work experience included the Champaign Telephone Company and an internship with the University of Illinois' Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Science. Candace volunteered for three years at the Crisis Nursery. She attends the University of Illinois.



CANDRA REED

Candra is a 2005 graduate of Douglas MacArthur High School where she earned a 3.57 grade point average on a 5.0 system and was ranked 121st in her class of 245. Her high school activities included the sophomore, junior, and senior year Class Councils, Dance Team, Drama Club, and Step Team. Candra's volunteer activities included Teen Reach, Decatur Urban Steppers, Talent Search, and her church choir and praise teams. Her work experience included Arby's, Subway, and the Macon County States Attorney's Office as an intern.

She attends Illinois State University, majoring in biology. Her career goal is to be a pediatrician.

DESIREE SANDFREY

Desiree is a 2006 graduate of Maroa-Forsyth High School where she earned a 4.39 grade point average on a 5.0 system and was ranked 16th in her class of 72. She was on the Honor Roll or High Honor Roll each semester all four years. Her high school activities included the Pathways to Excellence Program at Caterpillar Tractor Company, Family Career Community Leaders Program, and student assistant. She also worked at MC Sports. Desiree's extensive volunteer experience includes the local library, church projects, elementary school tutor, and the local hospital. She attends Illinois State University. Her career goal is to be a nurse.



BRANDON WOODS

Brandon is a 2006 graduate of Peoria High School where he earned a 2.8 grade point average on a 4.0 system, was ranked 28th in his class of 200, and had an ACT score of 26. His high school activities included Student Council, baseball, basketball, Key Club, and mixed ensemble. Brandon volunteered at the Peoria Civic Center for the state basketball tournament. He has worked at Chili's Restaurant and J.C. Penney. He now studies at Southern Illinois University with plans to major in computer engineering and graphic design. His career goal is to be an engineer.



Volunteers were on hand to share information with families at the back-to-school health fair in Peoria.

School health fair

On July 27 the Peoria Area Foster Care Coalition, Family to Family, and the Peoria City/County Health Department sponsored a back to school fair at the Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center.

The health agencies provided free dental, vision and hearing screenings. Additionally, fingerprinting and ID pictures (as required by DCFS) were provided. Booths were set up by area agencies to inform foster parents about available services.

The following community services and agencies participated: Youth Centered Services of White Oaks, U of I Cooperative Extension, Joining Forces, Boys and Girls Club, City of Peoria Neighborhood Division, Peoria Children's Home, System of Care, Headstart, Red Cross Bike Safety, Catholic Social Services, Post Adoption/LSSI, Counseling and Family Respite Services, and Family to Family.

Each of the 72 registered children received a school packet according to their grade level. They left with school supplies donated by the Caterpillar Corporation. There were also door prizes for the foster parents, who received training credit for attending. This was the first year of the event. Plans are to provide this service before each school year to make it easier for caregivers to have required screenings done for school and DCFS.

Local programs provide education help

Child and Adolescent Local Area Networks (LANs) are made up of child welfare agencies, schools, social services agencies and parents to respond to needs within the community. The LANs are available to provide planning assistance, services and financial support to families, including foster and adoptive parents. There are 15 LANs in Central Region. This past year, the service contracts have been focused on creating programs to stabilize children in their current educational settings. This newsletter feature will regularly highlight various services in a specific LAN.

LAN 16 covers Morgan, Scott, Cass, Brown and Schuyler counties. Hobby Horse House, located in Jacksonville, is one of the agencies serving families in LAN 16. The program is designed to work with students who are at high risk of truancy, suspension, or expulsion. Since there are over 50 school districts in the five counties of LAN 16, the program's main focus is on junior high school students in three of the school districts. The program employs a Family/School Liaison who assesses the need for services and coordinates the support with the student and his or her family.

In one recent case, the school social worker referred a student named Alice (name changed for privacy) to the Hobby Horse program. She was failing all of her

classes and typically attending school only one or two days a week. In addition, this was her second year in eighth grade. The school went to work to develop an Individualized Education Plan for Alice. Meanwhile, Hobby Horse connected her with a mentor to give Alice more support outside of school. It was her mentor who eventually convinced Alice to accept the help from school.

Alice's relationship with her new mentor did take some time to bear fruit. In the beginning, she skipped several meetings. However over time, they visited museums and malls, along with tackling schoolwork. Alice's attendance improved. She came to pass all of her classes (except gym). She set a personal goal to graduate and move on to high school. She even started talking about plans after high school.

Alice's story is inspiring, but not unique. There may be many other students who could benefit from the guidance and direction a program like this can provide. The Education Initiative programs serve all families, including those created through foster care, adoption and guardianship. For more information about this education initiative program or other programs in LAN 16, contact Lisa Colwell of DCFS at 217-479-4800 or lisa.colwell@illinois.gov.

Central Region Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Modules

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend PRIDE In-Service Training. Licensing and child welfare staff are invited to attend the training if they inform the college of their attendance a week prior to the training.

Springfield Area 217-786-2458

Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

QUINCY *Blessing Hospital*
Nov. 4, 11 & 18 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

SPRINGFIELD *Lincoln Land Community College*
Oct. 14, 21 & 28 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Integrated Assessment Training

This new, two-hour in-service training was created to answer caregivers questions about the Integrated Assessment Program.

Peoria Area 888-507-7433

LaSALLE *LaSalle Public Housing Authority*
Oct. 24 (Tue) 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Springfield Area 217-786-2458

SPRINGFIELD *Lincoln Land Comm. College*
Oct. 7 (Sat) 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Champaign Area 217-355-4644

NORMAL *BabyFold*
Nov. 18 (Sat) 9-11 a.m.

Child and Family Team Meetings

This instructor-led on-line training is designed to help caregivers understand how a CFTM helps the family and ensures a permanent home for the child; how to prepare for a meeting; what happens between team meetings; and when team meetings are no longer needed in a case. **To register** for this three-hour training, foster parents may call the DCFS Registration Unit in the Office of Training at 877-800-3393. Participants may also register to attend CFTM-C training at computer labs in Springfield and Chicago by calling the same number.

Sept. 23 (Sat) 8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six-hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

Peoria Area • 888-507-7433

PEORIA *Children's Home*
Oct. 10 & 17 (Tue) 6-9 p.m.
Nov. 8 & 15 (Wed) 6-9 p.m.

EAST MOLINE *Black Hawk Coll.*
Nov. 7 & 14 (Tue) 6-9 p.m.

Champaign Area • 217-355-4644

CHARLESTON *Ctr. for Human Svcs.*
Oct. 26 & Nov. 2 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

NORMAL *BabyFold*
Oct. 23 & 30 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Springfield Area • 217-786-2458

QUINCY *Blessing Hospital*
Oct. 7 & 14 (Sat) 1:30-4:30 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD *Lincoln Land Coll.*
Nov. 6 & 13 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Central Connections

Sponsor

Robert Blackwell, DCFS
Central Regional Administrator

Regional Reporter

Mary Bullock
5415 N. University
Peoria, IL 61614
Phone: 309-693-5400
Fax: 309-693-2582
E-mail: Mary.Bullock@illinois.gov

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.