

## Northern 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 Northern 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.



### **ANNIE ABRAM**

Annie, of Dundee, graduated in 2006 from Harry Jacobs High School where she earned a 2.43 grade point average on a 4.0 system. Her high school activities included marching band, concert band, speech team, Spanish Club, Distributive Education Program, Art Club, and Future Teachers of America. Annie's voluminous list of volunteer activities included Dundee Township Public Library, Little Angels Nursing Center, Girl Scouts, and Rosewood Nursing Center. She also worked at Dominick's and Kirlin's Hallmark. Annie now attends Elgin Community College and plans to transfer to a state university after two years. Her career goal is to be a Registered Nurse, Occupational Therapist, or Physical Therapist.



### **NICHOLAS ALFONSO**

Nicholas, of Woodstock, graduated from Marion Central Catholic High School. He earned a 3.66 grade point average on a 4.0 system and ranked 52<sup>nd</sup> in his class of 147. He scored 31 on his ACT test. His high school activities included track, cross-country, wrestling, and baseball. Academic honors included the High Honor Roll and Illinois State Scholar. During the summers Nicholas

worked as a laborer for Doherty Construction. He also volunteered as a camp counselor at YMCA Camp Edwards. Now he attends Illinois State University, majoring in education. His career goal is to be a college professor.



### **TAMARA DODD**

Tamara is a 2006 graduate of Manteno High School where she earned a 4.17 grade point average on a 5.0 system and was ranked 60<sup>th</sup> in her class of 138. Her high school activities included softball, class officer for two years, and girl scouts. Her volunteer experience includes Manteno Veteran's Home and St. Mary's Hospital. Tamara worked at McDonalds and as a certified nurses assistant at Bradley Royale Nursing Home. She is now a student at Northern Illinois University. Her career goal is to be an obstetric nurse.



### **SHARON GASPAR**

Sharon, of Lombard, is a 2006 graduate of Glenbard East High School where she earned a 4.4 grade point average on a 5.0 system and is a member of the National Honor Society. She was inducted into the Glenbard East Stage Guild for having over one hundred hours dedicated to

*Continued on Page 2*

## Scholarship recipients, con't.

theatre activities. Sharon has worked at Frank's Nursery and Crafts, Anna's Hallmark, and J.C. Penneys. She is active at Saint Pius X Church and sings in the teen ensemble. She attends Dominican University, where she is majoring in English and theatre and with a minor in secondary education. She would like to open an acting academy for teenagers. Her career goal is to be a high school English teacher and assist with the school's theatre program.



### ERICKA HILL

Ericka is a 2006 graduate of Hinsdale Adventist Academy where she earned a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 system and was on the Honor Roll her senior year. Her high school activities included gymnastics, Student Council Religious Vice-President, volleyball, office assistant, Public Relations Class Officer, and Sergeant At Arms Class Officer. Ericka volunteered as a candy striper for three years at Hinsdale Hospital. She now attends Lewis University, majoring in nursing. Her career goal is to be a nurse.



### TANIA LAWLESS

Tania is a 2005 graduate of Waubonsie Valley High School where she earned a 3.22 grade point average on a 4.0 system, was ranked 290<sup>th</sup> in her class of 680, and was on the Honor Roll all four years. Her high school activities included water polo, swimming, Running Club, Spanish Club, and choir. Tania's work experience includes swim instructor at Centennial Beach, Cadillac Club at Soldier Field, private nanny, and she has operated her own landscaping business for six years. She has volunteered at Harvest Sunday, Chicago Abused Women Coalition, and Cystic Fibrosis. Tania is in her second year at the University of Illinois at Chicago and has a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 system. She plans to major in chemical engineering.



### SHANNON LEONARD

Shannon is a 2006 graduate of Crystal Lake Central High School where she earned a 3.25 grade point average on a 4.0 system and was ranked 121<sup>st</sup> in her class of 327. She scored 25 on her ACT and was on the High Honor Roll. Her high school activities included Senior Mentor Program, Stagecrafters Club, editor of school literary magazine, and set construction for several plays and musicals. Shannon's volunteer experience included vacation bible school, soup kitchen, Chrysalis church retreat, and Tiger Buddies (she tutored students with learning disabilities). She has worked at Target. Shannon now attends the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in history. Her career goal is to be a high school history teacher.



### RACHEL OWEN

Rachel is a 2006 graduate of Aurora Christian High School where she earned a 3.09 grade point average on a 4.5 system. Her high school activities included Senior Class President, choir, student council, cheerleading, Spanish Club, and the drama team. She has been employed by Sonlife Ministries since 2003. Rachel has participated in four mission trips (primarily to rebuild schools) to Chicago, Cairo, Saint Louis, and Augusta, Georgia. She is now a student at Western Illinois University and plans to major in counseling and public speaking.



### KIMBERLY STEELE

Kimberly, of Beach Park, graduated in 2004 from Zion Benton Township High School. She earned a 3.24 grade point average on a 4.0 system, was ranked 98<sup>th</sup> in her class of 473, and received the Principal's Education Award. She was a key member of her high school volleyball team. Kimberly initially attended the College of Lake County where she was an honor roll student and was named to the National Junior College Athletic Association's Region IV All Tournament Team for volleyball. She now is a student at the University of Illinois at Springfield, majoring in international relations. Her career goal is to work for the FBI or CIA.



## MATTIE WILSON

Mattie is a 2006 graduate of Jefferson High School where she earned a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 system and ranked 91<sup>st</sup> in her class of 312. Her academic honors included the Honor Roll and Northern Illinois Scholar Athlete. Her high school activities included track & field, yearbook staff, and Black Achievers Organization. Mattie worked at Bing's Drive In and has volunteered at the Rockford Rescue Mission and the Salvation Army. She now attends Illinois State University, majoring in accounting. Her career goal is to be a certified public accountant.



## FRANK YOST

Frank is a 2006 graduate of Lincoln-Way East High School. He earned a 3.7 grade point average on a 4.3 system, was ranked 134 in his class of 805, and scored 28 points on his ACT. Frank's academic honors included Illinois State Scholar, National Honor Society, High Honor Roll, and a Scholar Athlete Award. His high school activities included soccer and basketball teams, Latin Club, and the Math Society. Frank volunteered at the Lake Geneva Youth Camp and tutored math students at Lincoln-Way. He now attends the University of Illinois, majoring in broadcasting/communications. His career goal is to be a sports journalist.

## LANs provide education help for families

In 2006, DCFS required that providers of Family Centered Services contracts focus on education. This spurred the development of many unique Education Initiative programs designed to work with youth at risk of truancy, suspension, or expulsion. These services are tailored to the needs of the community through Local Area Networks (LANs). Some providers work directly with specific schools and some work more broadly with youth in a particular area. Here is just a sampling of local programs and examples of how they can help students and their families.

McHenry County Mental Health Board found success through its Attendance Initiative. One high school junior had a track record of missing school. When the program coordinator discovered the youth actually liked to run track, a plan took shape. They worked together to develop a positive behavior program, focusing on the student's talents and desires. He was able to earn track shoes, and equipment, and to have a tutor for his academic subjects. His attendance improved dramatically.

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Kids Hope United in Elgin (LAN 47) developed a program to combat truancy. An 11-year old had a pattern of poor attendance and academic performance. Working with the social services at the middle school, the team developed a Truancy Reduction Contract. His counselor saw an

improvement in attendance and his grades made a turnaround. Counseling even continued during the summer months to get the youth on solid ground for the new school year.

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Garden of Prayer Youth Center in LAN 26 serves families in Kankakee County. The center launched the Students Excel with Family Enrichment (SEFE) program last year with more than 25 students. Among them, one six-year-old girl stood out. She had made it through two years of Pre-K and started in Kindergarten without knowing the alphabet. She and her tutor went to work. She shared the same classroom with her older brother who was in the second grade. When the little girl correctly answered alphabet flash cards, her brother would be so excited and make comments like, "I knew you could do it" or "good job little sister." With positive comments from her tutor and brother, the little girl soon learned her alphabet. Garden of Prayer celebrated this event by giving the girl a gift and taking the whole class to McDonalds. By the end of the school year, the little girl was reading, and she was so excited for her new skills.

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LAN programs are open to all youth, including those in foster care, adoption and guardianship homes. For more information on these and other LAN programs contact the DCFS LAN Liaison in your regional office or Judy Rehder at 309-937-1071.

# Northern 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.

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2903

#### Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**GLEN ELLYN**  
Nov. 2 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.  
Nov. 4 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Coll. of DuPage**  
6:30-9:30 p.m.  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

#### Module 7 - Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity

(Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

**KANKAKEE** **Kankakee Comm. College**  
Oct. 7 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

## Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

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.

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2903

**ELGIN** **Judson College**  
Oct. 28 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**GLEN ELLYN** **College of DuPage**  
Nov. 4 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**KANKAKEE** **Kankakee Comm. Coll.**  
Nov. 18 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**WAUKEGAN** **Waukegan Comm. Church**  
Oct. 28 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

### Rock Valley College Area 815-921-2010

**ROCKFORD** **Rock Valley Coll.**  
Oct. 17 & 19 (Tue/Thu) 6-9 p.m.

## Integrated Assessment Training

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

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2903

**AURORA** **Comfort Suites**  
Oct. 19 (Thu) 7-9 p.m.

**ELGIN** **Judson College**  
Oct. 2 (Mon) 7-9 p.m.

**JOLIET** **Catholic Charities**  
Nov. 3 (Fri) 7-9 p.m.

### Rock Valley College Area 815-921-2010

**ROCKFORD** **Rock Valley College**  
Dec. 7 (Thu) 6:30-8:30 p.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.

## Northern News

### Regional Reporter

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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.