

Cook County Advocate

2010 • Vol. 5

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

Cook regions send 29 off to college with DCFS scholarships

This year, 29 students whose cases were served by programs in the three Cook County regions headed to college with the benefits included in the DCFS Scholarship program. The scholarship includes the waiver of tuition and mandatory fees at one of the nine Illinois state universities or Illinois junior colleges, a monthly maintenance grant of \$471 and a medical card.

Scholarship recipients were chosen statewide on the basis of scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement. Next year's scholarship application process begins in January and ends in March. Contact the youth's caseworker or the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959.



Lindsay Anderson

Lindsay, of Hanover Park, is a 2010 graduate of Streamwood High School where she earned a 4.79 GPA on a 5.0 scale and was the Salutatorian of her class. She was inducted to the National Honor Society and the Japanese National

Honor Society. While in high school, she participated on the Principal's Student Advisory Board, speech team, multi-cultural club, basketball and soccer teams, and on the class council. Lindsay also volunteered as a student tutor at a local elementary school and as a helper at the Hanover Township Youth and Family Services. Lindsay is now at the University of Illinois, planning to major in East-Asian studies or international studies.

She is now a student at Northern Illinois University, majoring in biological science.



Dexter Burns

Dexter, from Chicago, is a 2010 graduate of the High School of the Arts at South Shore with a 3.2 GPA on a four-point scale. While in high school, Dexter was a member of the student government, freshman mentoring, Spanish club, debate

team, National Honor Society, and the School of the Arts Choir. He earned the perfect attendance award, and he also earned the Outstanding Leadership Award from the Avalon Park United Church of Christ for his leadership in working with the youth ministry. Dexter attends the University of Illinois at Springfield, pursuing a major in international studies.



Lillie Blackmon

Lillie graduated from Buffalo Grove High School, where she earned a 4.02 GPA on a 5.0 scale. While in high school, she was a member of the track and field and gymnastics teams. She also served on the Executive Board. Lillie's volunteer

activities included serving as a junior counselor at Marvista in Los Angeles and for the youth department at her local church. She earned Special Recognition Awards at both for her outstanding volunteer service.



Michelle Crayton

Michelle, from Waterman, is a 2010 graduate of Indian Creek High School where she earned a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Michelle was a member of her high school's basketball team, Spanish club, and prom committee, and she was a class

officer. She earned several school and area awards for

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her accomplishments on the basketball court, including the school rebound record and recognition as an All-Area Basketball Player. Her volunteer activities include completing a mission trip to Mexico; cleaning and exercising animals at the local shelter; and serving with Teenage Group Services at the Kishwaukee Hospital. Now Michelle attends Northern Illinois University, where she majors in business administration.



Amber Doherty

Amber, from Oak Lawn, is a 2010 graduate of Mother McAuley High School. She earned a 3.21 GPA on a four-point scale. Amber was a very active member of the National Art Honor Society at her school and was consistently on the Honor Roll.

She was also very active in her parish's youth group, where she participated in many charities and activities. She joined a mission trip to Montana where they helped build homes on a Native American reservation. She was a member of her youth group's Leadership Council and was awarded the Vicariate V. Award for Service and Social Justice by the church bishop. Amber is now studying at Augustana College.



Ashley Dorsey

Ashley, of Chicago, is a 2010 graduate of Bronzeville Scholastic Academy High School, where she earned a 3.53 GPA on a four-point scale. Ashley was an active member of the track team, the drama club and the Student Council while in

high school. She was awarded the President's Excellence Award, the All-American Scholar Award for academic excellence, and the Chicago Scholars award for excelling in academics and extra-curricular activities. She was also inducted as a member of the National Honor Society. Committed to community involvement, Ashley participated in the annual summer Hunger Walk with her church. Now Ashley is studying at the University of Dayton and plans to major in finance.



Joseph Ehrich

Joseph, from Frankfurt, is a 2010 graduate of Peotone High School where he earned a 4.75 GPA on a five-point scale. While in high school, Joseph participated in the band, choir, Show Choir, Jazz Band, and drama club. He was the school mascot for two years. Joseph was inducted into the National Honor Society and the International Thespian Society. He has received numerous awards for his vocal and instrumental accomplishments. He also volunteered time to his church and as part of the support staff for the Royal Family Kids Camp. Currently Joseph attends the University of Illinois, majoring in animal sciences.



Sara Fiorenzo

Sara, of Park Forest, is a 2010 graduate of Rich East High School where she earned a 4.12 out of 4.0 weighted GPA. During high school Sara participated in Student Council, cheerleading, volleyball, soccer, and bowling. She was a member of the

National Honor Society, the Spanish Honor Society, and the Culture Club. She received numerous athletic awards including Scholar Athlete all four years, perfect attendance awards, and an ACT Team Honor award. Sara is now a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, pursuing a degree in nutrition.



Robert Glassner

Robert, of Skokie is a 2010 graduate of Niles North High School where he earned a 4.42 GPA and scored a 28 on his ACT exam. In high school he was a member of the football and track teams, the WHO (We Help Others) Club, the math team, the

Recycling Club/Green Squad and Physics for Phun. He also served as a Student Leader Peer Tutor, a Physical Education Leader and a Dance Marathon fundraising participant. Robert also volunteered his time with the Special Olympics, and various organizations that provide food and clothing to families, individuals with special needs, and the elderly. Now Robert is a student at Northeastern Illinois University, majoring in secondary education.



LaTanya Hutsona

LaTanya, from Crete, is a 2010 graduate of Crete-Monee High School where she earned a 4.3 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In high school, LaTanya was a four-year member of the High Honor Roll and was selected to be a member of the

National Honor Society. She also participated on the varsity tennis team, the marching and pep bands, honors band class, the book club, Key Club, and the speech team. LaTanya was chosen as Team Captain on both the speech and tennis teams. She volunteered through her church to help donate food, clothes, and toys to the community during the holidays and also served weekly in the children's department. LaTanya is a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with plans to pursue a degree in psychology.



HaoYang Jiang

HaoYang, of Chicago, is a 2010 graduate of Albert G. Lane Technical High School where he earned a 4.25 weighted GPA on a four-point scale. He consistently earned academic distinction as a member of the Principal's List.

HaoYang participated on the school swim team, the policy debate team, the poetry slam team and as a member of the school orchestra. As a freshman and first-year debater, he and his partner won the Varsity Debate City Championships. As a senior, his poetry slam team finished first in the Fairchild Challenge Eco-Slam competition. HaoYang consistently held employment at a local flea market and with his school's After School Matters program, which also allowed him to provide volunteer tutoring services for debate students. HaoYang is now studying at the University of Wisconsin, majoring in political science.



Reginald Jones

Reginald is a 2010 graduate of Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy in Chicago, where he earned a 4.5 out of 5.0 GPA. While in high school, he participated on the basketball,

football, cross country and volleyball teams. Reginald was also involved in the Beta Club, band, and math club. He was inducted into the National Honor Society and served as the group's Treasurer. Reginald earned recognition on the High Honor Roll all four years of high school and the GPA award for having the highest GPA on every sports team he participated on. He volunteers each summer at a day camp for young children. Currently, Reginald is a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, studying engineering/technology.



Ashley Jones-Phillips

Ashley is a 2010 graduate of Hammond High School in Indiana. She earned a 3.6 GPA on a four-point scale. She earned academic recognition on the Dean's List and the Scholar's Honor Roll, and received a Certificate for Academic

Merit. Ashley's high school activities included drama club, choir, history club and Spanish club. She was a member of the Dance Team and YADA (Youth Against Drugs and Alcohol). Ashley is a long-time volunteer at her church where she helps care for the elderly and performs cleaning duties. She also participates in a community knitting project for women's shelters. Ashley now attends the University of Southern Indiana, majoring in communications and journalism.

Joshua Lettner (photo not available)

Joshua, from Wilmette, is a 2010 graduate of New Trier Township High School where he earned a 3.65 out of 4.0 GPA. In high school Joshua consistently earned recognition on the Honor Roll. Joshua participated in several volunteer activities through his membership in the "Helping Hand" club. The club held bake sales and sold lollipops with all the proceeds going towards the purchase of games for hospital patients. As a testament to his hard work for the club, he was nominated to serve as its secretary. Joshua also volunteered time to the Chicago Food Depository where he helps box canned foods for needy families. Joshua is now studying at Illinois State University with plans to pursue a degree in the medical field.



Kevin Logan

Kevin, from Orland Park, graduated from Carl Sandburg High School where he earned a 3.2 GPA on a four-point scale. Kevin was recognized for Perfect Attendance during high school. He participated

for two years in his local Relay For Life to help raise money for cancer treatment and research. He also participates in prayer groups sponsored by his local parish and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center for Chicago. Kevin was selected to participate in the Computer Maintenance category of Illinois Skills USA. Now he is a student at Illinois State University, majoring in psychology.



Ruth Manns

Ruth is a 2010 graduate of Phoenix Military Academy High School in Chicago, where she earned a 3.7 out of 4.0 GPA. She was awarded the "Best Attitude" Certificate in high school for being the most respectful and courteous student.

Ruth was one of the first inducted members to the Phoenix Military Academy's National Honor Society. She was also involved in extracurricular activities such as the JROTC, Sisterhood, and the cheerleading, softball and volleyball teams. Ruth is an active member of her church, where she mentors young women. Additionally, Ruth has volunteer experience from working at a daycare home, serving at a senior citizen's home and completing a walk for breast cancer. Currently, Ruth is studying sociology at Northern Illinois University.



Leekita McCorker

Leekita, of Richton Park, graduated from Rich South High School. She earned a 3.5 GPA on a four point scale and she was on the High Honor Roll during each year of high school. She participated in the Key Club, yearbook staff, and

peer mediation as extracurricular activities. Leekita also volunteered in her community in many ways, such as managing aid stations for Richton Park's Bike-a-thon, collecting clothes for the Holiday Fair to donate to

families and completing walk-a-thons for cancer. She is also a committed supporter of the Hearts of Hope for Haiti foundation. Leekita is now studying at the University of Illinois at Springfield, where she plans to major in pre-dentistry.



Shanita Mullen

Shanita is a 2010 graduate of Orr Academy High School in Chicago where she earned a 3.5 out of a 4.0 GPA. Shanita achieved honor roll status and excellent attendance awards every year from elementary school until the end of high school.

She was also on the Principal's List and a member of the National Honor Society. Shanita likes to draw, design and study law. She was a member of her high school Mosaic Art Club and Educational Talent Search Program. She worked for Teen Town, an after school leadership corps program that encourages youth to become leaders in their communities. Shanita now attends Chicago State University where she majors in Art and Design.



Abelia Perez

Abelia, from Chicago, graduated from Lane Technical High School with a 3.3 GPA on a four-point scale. She was very involved with the Lane Tech Performance Band, Marching Band, Symphonic Band and Pep Band, where she played

the clarinet. The band played for community parades, basketball and football games. During the summer of 2009, Abby worked with the After School Matters program in video production. She enjoyed volunteer time spent doing child care and missionary work at her church. Currently, Abby is studying at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is interested in psychology and social work.



Antionette Randle

Antionette, from East Hazel Crest, is a 2010 graduate of Thornwood High School where she earned a 3.6 out of a 4.0 GPA. She made the Honor Roll throughout her high school career and was named as a distinguished scholar. Antionette participated in athletic extra-curricular activities as well. She was on the basketball and softball teams, and she was a member of the school's chess team and Round Table book club. Outside of school, she volunteered in the nursery of the New Faith Baptist Church and worked seasonally at the Lion's Club Pool. Antionette is now a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She plans to major in biology.



Crystal Spruiell

Crystal is a 2010 graduate of Gwendolyn Brooks College Prep Academy in Chicago where she earned a 4.5 weighted grade point average on a four-point scale. Crystal was a member of the University of Chicago's Collegiate Scholars Program, a highly competitive academic program offered to Chicago Public School students. She was also inducted into the National Honor Society. She participated in the Mystique Dance Team, Pom-Pom team, Special Friends Club, and Shekina Praise Dance team. She also volunteered to feed homeless individuals by packing lunches to distribute on Lower Wacker Drive. Crystal is now studying at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where she plans to major in chemistry or biochemistry.

Sa'Rah Stroud (photo not available)

Sa'Rah, of Oak Park, is a 2009 graduate of Oak Park & River Forest High School where she earned a 2.9 GPA on a four-point scale. She is now a second-year student at Northern Illinois University, where she is pursuing a degree in nursing. She has a long history of involvement with the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority and the Rhoer Club, which is an auxiliary organization for girls in middle school and high school. For her dedication to the club, she earned the Presidential Award for volunteering. She also volunteers with the Off the Streets Club for Kids and the March of Dimes marathon.



Raelene Struckmeyer

Raelene, from Winfield, graduated from Community High School (District 94) in West Chicago. She earned a 3.5 out of a 4.0 GPA. She was inducted into the National Honor Society her sophomore year and was elected president of the Student Council. Raelene has experience volunteering at camps for mentally and physically disabled children, a DuPage convalescent center, and a resale shop that forwards all proceeds toward a Wheaton church and community organizations. She attended Operation Snowball, a program in school that promotes wellness and a drug and alcohol-free lifestyle. Raelene is now studying at Illinois State University, where she plans to major in psychology.



Bianca Taylor

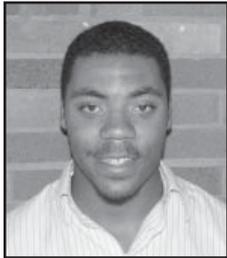
Bianca is a 2010 graduate of Austin Business and Entrepreneurship Academy High School in Chicago. She earned a 3.75 grade GPA on a four-point scale, was a member of the National Honor Society and received the Sankofa Center Honor Roll Award. Additionally, she had perfect attendance while in high school. Bianca was voted student council president. She also enjoyed being a part of the basketball team, cross country team, Pom-Pom squad and the Austin Campus Dance team. She stayed connected with her community by volunteering with the Bottomless Closet, the YMCA and Austin Gives Back. Bianca now attends the University of Iowa and plans to major in computer science.



Whitney Taylor

Whitney, from Chicago, graduated from Rich South High School where she earned a 3.5 out of 4.0 GPA. She was on the National Honor Roll in high school for four consecutive years. Whitney earned honors for completing a four-week business program at the University of Illinois. She also received an award from the officials of Miss Teen of America for academic and leadership

accomplishments. Whitney was also very active in her church community where she enjoyed the Praise Dance and Miming Ministry. Whitney attends the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, majoring in accounting and business administration.



Carter Tindell-Hall

Carter is a 2010 graduate of Rauner College Prep Charter School in Chicago with a 3.6 out of a 4.0 GPA. Carter has an athletic background that includes being captain of the rugby and football teams. He was also a member of his high school

basketball and cross country teams. He earned awards as Student Athlete of the Month and was chosen as one the best football players (All Conference Player) in the 2009 Inner City conference. Carter also shined academically, having completed honors and Advanced Placement classes and being inducted to the National Honor Society. He was also elected to the senior student council. Carter is now studying history at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania.



Chaunte Wilder

Chaunte is a 2010 graduate of Chicago International Charter School (CICS) Longwood Campus, with a 3.9 out of 4.0 GPA. In high school, Chaunte was elected to Student Council, was captain of the Academic Decathlon, participated

in the Females Mentoring Society and was inducted in the National Honor Society. She also was selected for a college bridge program at National-Louis University. Over the summer she worked at the Harold Washington Social Security Center. Now she is a student at Illinois State University where she is majoring in education.



Derrick Wright

Derrick, from Chicago, graduated from Hales Franciscan High School with a 2.9 GPA on a four-point scale. In high school, Derrick participated on the baseball, soccer and basketball teams. He served

on the Student Council and earned the opportunity to attend the 100 Black Men scholarship dinner by scoring 24 points on his ACT. He also participated as a student judge with the Mikva Challenge program for the 2008 presidential election. In 2007, Derrick completed a summer internship for the Cook County Public Guardian's office. Derrick is now a student at Western Illinois University, where he plans to major in Business and Marketing.



Brittany Young

Brittany is a 2010 graduate of Lake View High School. Brittany received Honor Roll and Perfect Attendance Awards during all four of her high school years. She graduated with a 3.7 GPA on a four-point scale. She was on the track

and field team and was voted vice president of her senior class. She participated in Mayor Daley's Book Club, her prom fashion show and the Principal for A Day program. Additionally, Brittany volunteered at Impact Child Care Center and the Joel Hall Dance Center. Currently she is studying at the University of Illinois in Springfield with plans to major in psychology.

Cook County Advocate Regional Reporters

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Anyone can call the regional reporter with story suggestions about:

- Foster parent association news and schedules
- Local training notices
- Features on foster families and community members working for children
- Ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.

Caregivers stay informed and have their say at advisory councils

Each of the Cook County regions has an advisory group made up of foster, adoptive or guardianship caregivers. The regional advisory councils meet monthly with leadership of the regional foster care programs. They get news of DCFS policies and programs. Caregivers can also discuss how programs do, could or should work, and they troubleshoot to find solutions. The meetings are often used to present training on specific topics, and caregivers can earn credits toward license renewal.

The regional advisory councils also have representatives to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council so local issues that affect other caregivers can be addressed. Those members report back to the regions with news from the state board.

The regional advisory councils are open to participation by all caregivers with DCFS or private agencies. Relative caregivers, traditional foster parents, adoptive and guardianship families will all find something relevant at each meeting. This fall the regions will be preparing the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans. Those plans describe how the foster care program adheres to the Rights and Responsibilities outline in the Foster Parent Law. It is mandatory that the plans reflect and document caregivers' input to the draft. Caregivers should make a point to come to advisory council meetings in September through November so they can take part in drafting the Implementation Plan.

Cook Central DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council

Contact:

Foster Parent Support Specialists at 773-292-7879

Meets fourth Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. DCFS, 3518 W. Division, Chicago
No December meeting.

Cook North DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council

Contact:

Iris Cuevas at 312-328-2535
Meets second Tuesday at 10 a.m. DCFS, 1911 S. Indiana, Chicago

Cook South DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council

Contacts: Chair Angela Barber at 773-578-0079

Gloria Orange-Long of DCFS at 773-371-6115

Meets third Wednesday at 10 a.m. DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

Foster Parents, Our Greatest Resource Support Group

Contact:

Elisse Worrell at 773-371-6114

Info line at 773-371-6113

Meets second Tuesday from 10 a.m. to Noon

DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

DCFS Cook South Suburban Support Group

Contact:

Adrienne Taylor at 708-210-3578

Info line at 773-371-6113

Meets fourth Thursday in Jan., March, May, July, Sept. and Nov. from 9 a.m. to Noon

DCFS, 15115 Dixie Hwy., Harvey For DCFS and private agency families. Training credits offered.

Regional Representatives to Statewide Council

Cook North



Irma Dixon



Edith Cruz

Cook Central



Rolinda Robinson



Birdia Jenkins

Cook South



Angela Barber

Second Cook South position currently open.



Cook Region Caregiver Training

Foster PRIDE In-Service Modules

All caregivers are welcome to attend PRIDE In-Service Training. The descriptions below will allow you to decide which classes fit your family's needs or circumstances. Advance registration is required for all classes. In addition to the slate of classroom courses, caregivers can also take advantage of Digital Pride modules on CD and the full offering of Lending Library materials.

For the most up-to-date and complete schedule information for classes offered in your area, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center anytime at www.DCFStraining.org or call the DCFS Office of Training at 877-800-3393 during regular business hours.

Module 1 - Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk (12 training hours)

This module focuses on building self-esteem in children. It covers how kids act when they need recognition, power, freedom, enjoyment, and a feeling of belonging. Caregivers will learn how to listen to what kids say and not what we think they say.

Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs (9 training hours)

This workshop provides practical information to foster parents about how to use effective discipline techniques such as I-messages, natural and logical consequences, time out and how to catch kids being "good" and what to do to encourage positive behavior.

Module 3 & 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse (9 training hours)

Participants learn to differentiate normal from problematic sexual behaviors in children and youth, signs and symptoms of sexual abuse and ways to help sexually abused children recover.

Module 5 - Supporting Relationships between Children and Their Families (9 training hours)

This training focuses on helping foster parents learn how to help kids attach to caregivers and at the same time stay loyal to birth families. Caregivers learn about how to prepare and support children for and after visits with the birth family and how to share the parenting role with birth parents.

Module 6 - Working as a Professional Team Member (9 training hours)

Foster parents learn team members' roles, when and how to be an advocate for children, what conflict is and their own

personal style for managing it, and how conflict can be a "win - win" situation for everyone involved.

Module 7 - Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity (6 training hours)

Culture includes traditions, values, customs and history. What "culture" means to a child's self-esteem, how to manage cultural diversity in a foster home, how to discuss sensitive issues with children and how to help a child record his or her history are topics covered in this module.

Module 8 - Promoting Permanency Outcomes (9 training hours)

The focus of this training is on families who have children in care and supporting reunification of the children and parents.

Module 9 - Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family (6 training hours)

In this training, caregivers learn how fostering children can affect family relationships and how to minimize stresses that can result. They also learn about the supports that are available.

Module 10 - Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children and Families (15 training hours)

Foster parents study the risk factors for chemical use, abuse, and dependency and understand relapse and recovery and be able to acquire skills necessary to be an active member of the team to support recovery in birth parents.

Module 12 - Understanding and Promoting Preteen and Teen Development (6 training hours)

This new course assists caregivers to identify developmentally appropriate ways to best

promote healthy development for preteens and teens who have experienced abuse, neglect and trauma. This six-hour module will help foster/adopt caregivers understand teen brain development and the impact of trauma and loss on preteens and teens. Participants will learn specific strategies that caregivers can use when fostering teenagers in the day to day life of the foster family.

The Teen in Foster Care: Supporting Attachment (6 training hours)

Attachment and the Teen in Family Foster Care will help foster/adopt caregivers to understand how early attachment experiences have impacted the teen's development. The training covers the teen's perspective on how the accumulation of loss, separation and trauma impacts his or her beliefs, feelings, behaviors and relationships. Participants will learn specific tips for helping manage behaviors that develop over time from the teen's adaptive responses to trauma, grief and loss.

Educational Advocacy

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.