

THE

All American

NEWSLETTER

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Meet the latest American School scholarship winners

As we begin a new year of *All American* newsletters, it is fitting to look back at some of 2009's shining stars. Certainly the success of all our students is of great importance, but the accomplishments of the students profiled in this newsletter give us special satisfaction. These eighteen scholarship recipients continue the American School's 71-year tradition of recognizing our graduates' excellence in academics and extra-curricular activities.

A committee consisting of American School president **Gary R. Masterton**, president emeritus **William Hunding**, guidance counselor **Janet Howe**, school trustee **Dr. John Kemp**, school consultant **Cher Tufly** and special guest member **Dr. John Murphy**, president of the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration, selected three students to receive \$2000 awards and fifteen others to receive \$1000 awards. The \$21,000 in scholarship awards push the School's all-time award total to more than \$700,000, and nearly 1400 graduates have benefitted from the program.

In his remarks to corporate members at a luncheon following the scholarship selection meeting, President Masterton saluted this year's applicants and thanked the scholarship committee for their work in selecting the winners. He also thanked **Marie Johnson** for coordinating the scholarship application process and paid special tribute to **Dr. Fred Aho**, a longtime American School trustee and scholarship committee member who died shortly before the 2009 scholarship winners were chosen.



Melissa Giroux
Dallas, Texas

Melissa Giroux is the recipient of the R.T. Miller Award and is using her scholarship to attend Brigham Young University, where she plans on studying civil engineering. Melissa has had designs on a career in architecture since she was nine years old and plans on designing buildings that are both attractive and functional. She also would like to become a writer and credits the American School for helping her discover that talent.

“When I started my American School courses, I had very little confidence in my writing ability,” she wrote. “However, as I progressed through the curriculum, I noticed that writing was becoming easier for me. In addition to my schoolwork, I now often write for fun. I used to feel that writing was my weakness, but the American School helped me turn it into a strength.”

Outside of school, Melissa enjoys her part-time job at a local supermarket and counts running and reading among her hobbies.



Kristen Russell
Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania

Kristen Russell is the recipient of the Henry Buresh Award and is using her scholarship to attend Kettering University, where she plans on studying mechanical engineering and biology. Her long-term goal is to become a pediatrician, but she already has experience helping children in need. Kristen and her family traveled to Kenya, where she worked with children orphaned as a result of the AIDS virus, and, as part of her exchange student program, she was a mentor for young children in Belgium.

Both at home and overseas, music is a noteworthy part of Kristen’s life. She is an accomplished pianist and flautist and has played in a private recital at famed Carnegie Hall in New York City. Besides making music, Kristen has also received national recognition in speech and debate competitions.

Outside of school, Kristen enjoys snowskiing, knitting and photography and hopes that she “will continue to use my educational background, life experiences and God-given talents to further serve others during my lifetime.”



Alyssa Thomas
Newark, Delaware

Alyssa Thomas is the recipient of the Presidents’ Award and is using her scholarship to attend Delaware Technical and Community College, where she plans on studying nursing. Alyssa is interested in a career in nursing because “there is a great need for nurses, it will allow me to have a full share in assisting the infirm, and it will help me build admirable characteristics such as patience, self-sacrifice and compassion.”

She has, however, already demonstrated a willingness to help those in need. For the past ten years, Alyssa has participated in volunteer teaching work, devoting nearly 70 hours per month to that endeavor, and, after she earns her nursing degree from Delaware Tech, she plans on volunteering her nursing skills as well.

When she is not busy studying or volunteering, Alyssa enjoys reading, writing, playing the piano and gourmet cooking and has been a partner in a small cleaning service and a small resale business.



**Kathleen Benz
Benton, Kentucky**

Kathleen Benz is using her scholarship to attend College of the Ozarks, where she plans on studying nursing. Kathleen and her family have spent considerable time as missionaries in Cambodia, where they provide a children's home for 17 orphans, and her experiences there have had an enormous impact on her life and career goals.

"My desire...my vision...my dream is that my life be used to give Cambodian women the same level of care that I, as an American, would receive," she wrote. "By aiding and assisting through education and proper

health care, it is my hope that fewer children will lose their mothers and the end result will be fewer orphans in Cambodia."

When she is not studying or helping those in need, Kathleen has worked as a paper carrier, nanny, office assistant and translator. She also enjoys reading and baking.



**Deanna Boring
Alva, Florida**

Deanna Boring is using her scholarship to attend Edison State College, where she is pursuing a degree in paralegal studies. After completing her studies at Edison State, she plans on continuing her education at a university and then proceed to law school.

"Having a baby at age 17 affected my past, present and future," she wrote. "I want to work in the corporate side of the legal industry but do pro bono work in family law for young parents that have been in my situation. There are a lot of times in my life when I need somebody on my

side, helping me get what I need. I want to be a mentor for young parents who need legal help."

When she is not in school or spending time with her daughter, Deanna works full-time as an administrative assistant and counts reading, painting and sewing among her hobbies.



**Katherine Callis
Matoaca, Virginia**

Katherine Callis is using her scholarship to attend John Tyler Community College, where she is studying nursing. Nursing runs in Katherine's family, but she has a specific type in mind for her career.

"Back in ninth grade I was asked to do a project on my career goal," she wrote. "I didn't want to do my project on something as basic as an RN, which made me realize that I didn't simply want to be an RN. After doing some research, I decided that I would make it my goal to become a nurse anesthetist. I am now on my way to meeting that goal!"

Indeed, after Katherine completes studies at John Tyler, she plans on earning a Master's degree in that field from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Outside of school, Katherine has operated a small cleaning business and enjoys volunteering reading classic works by Jane Austen and William Shakespeare.



Amy Camarena
Chicago, Illinois

Amy Camarena is using her scholarship to attend Columbia College, where she plans on studying fiction writing, screenwriting and playwriting. She enjoys attending college close to home and meeting new people.

“Having been homeschooled most of my life, many of my friends and teachers marvel at how well I have been able to adjust to college. Indeed, it was almost a seamless transition for me,” she wrote. “I try to keep my scheduled as well-balanced as possible. My years at the American School were vital to my education, an education which Columbia College is more

than furthering. I know how rare it is to know that there is no other place you would rather be than where you are; nevertheless, here at Columbia, I have been blessed to have this life.”

When she is not studying, Amy works at a popular sandwich shop and enjoys reading, knitting, painting, playing the guitar and visiting Chicago attractions such as the Art Institute and Millennium Park.



Christopher Fitz-Henry
Ewa Beach, Hawaii

Christopher Fitz-Henry is using his scholarship to attend Liberty University, where he plans on studying accounting and business management through Liberty’s distance learning program. Christopher is proof that hard work and perseverance pay off. He first enrolled in the American School more than a decade ago, but, due to family and work obligations, he did not earn his American School diploma until 2008.

The oldest of eight children, Christopher studied at home and monitored his younger siblings while his mother worked full-time. He himself began working full-time at age 17 and became a husband and father by age 20.

“I was proud of what I had accomplished, but I was determined that I would finish my education,” he wrote. “I have dreams of starting my own business someday, and I want to be prepared.”

When he is not working, studying or spending time with his family, Christopher enjoys reading, hiking and working with computers.



Audrey Jenkins
Shamong, New Jersey

Audrey Jenkins is using her scholarship to attend Purdue University, where she is studying political science and biology. Most people would consider those two disciplines to be an unlikely combination, but not Audrey. She knows exactly what she wants to do after college.

“Since I was little, our natural environment has always been one of my greatest treasures,” she wrote. “With a political science degree that will help me understand human political relations and a biology degree that will provide me with the foundation to learn about and interpret new and more detailed scientific knowledge, I aim to travel around the world studying our environment and working between nations to assist global environmental cooperation. This is my dream, and I know I can make it come true.”

Ashley is certainly off to a good start. She was in the top twenty percent of her class as a freshman, and, when she is not studying, she enjoys writing short stories and playing the mandolin.



**Sharon Lodholm
Lakewood, Washington**

Sharon Lodholm is using her scholarship to attend Tacoma Community College and later aspires to attend BYU-Idaho. Her decision to study physical therapy is a personal one. A few years ago, her oldest brother broke his back, twisted his spine and was told he'd likely never walk again. That's when Sharon and her mother moved in with him to care for him.

"Every morning I would stretch out and massage his legs and feet in order to get them moving more freely. Helping in this way made me feel useful and needed. It is because of this experience that I have chosen to

become a physical therapist myself."

Sharon's other life experiences include being one of six homeschooled children in her family and living for three years in Guam, a place where she "learned to enjoy the simple things in life," including reading, hiking, cooking and crocheting.



**Elisabeth Mahoney
Shawano, Wisconsin**

Elisabeth Mahoney is using her scholarship to attend Fox Valley Technical College, where she plans on studying natural resources and nursing. By attending college close to home, Elisabeth can tend to her farm, where she raises cattle and sheep. When she was 16, she bought her first two registered Black Angus heifers and started her own herd of cattle. Later that year, she bought seven ewes and started a crossbreed flock of sheep. Bolstered by her success with cattle and sheep, she became involved with a government program that allowed her to add organic poultry to her farm. Today, people come from miles around to Elisabeth's farm to buy organic chicken.

"Preserving our natural resources is my passion and is directly related to my everyday decisions on the farm," she wrote. "After I graduate, I will apply my knowledge to improve livestock and wildlife management in my region."

In addition to schoolwork, Elisabeth has attended the World Beef Expo four times and enjoys reading, fishing and cooking.



**Reid Meyen
Needville, Texas**

Reid Meyen is using his scholarship to attend Wharton County Junior College, where he plans on studying engineering design. Reid chose to study drafting because he enjoys drawing and computers. He notes that "even though computer technology used in drafting is changing and improving, the basic principles of drafting and dimensioning stay the same. Becoming proficient in it as a career is a good investment of time."

Reid also found the American School to be a good investment of his time and talents, writing that "homeschooling defined my education. It has a lot of potential, and in my case it worked well. The most important thing I learned was a love of learning, especially by reading."

With that said, it's no surprise that one of Reid's hobbies is reading a variety of literary genres. He also enjoys model rocketry and has been employed as an installer of home appliances such as refrigerators, dishwashers and washers and dryers.



Karly Parker
Grand Chain, Illinois

Karly Parker is using her scholarship to attend Shawnee Community College, where she plans on studying veterinary technology. Karly already has experience in helping animals because she lives in a part of Illinois that has a very high number of stray cats and dogs. When she was nine years old, Karly and her sister, along with their parents, created a dog rescue program that exists to this day.

“It is a daily job. There is never a time when the care of the animals can be put aside. No matter what the weather is or how you feel or what else is going on that day, the animals must be cared for,” she explained. “The work has been hard, but the payoff has been great. Over the years, we’ve rescued numerous dogs and cats. All were saved from terrible lives of injury, disease and homelessness.”

Besides studying and saving animals, Karly enjoys reading, soccer and softball.



Naarah Pinkerton
Providence, Rhode Island

Naarah Pinkerton is using her scholarship to attend the Rhode Island Hospital Institute of Diagnostic Imaging, where she plans to study radiology.

“My motivation to do well in school is not based on a desire for wealth or prestige. It comes from something stronger,” she wrote. “It comes from a desire to use what I learn to help someone else, to work for something larger than myself, and to use my life to make a positive difference.”

Naarah further explained that “the fact that I am willing to work hard in school can be seen from the quality of my American School work. I was able to do well even in subjects which were more difficult for me because I understood why mastering my lessons was important. They prepared me to do well in life.”

When she’s not studying, Naarah enjoys literature, art, tennis, snowboarding, computer programming, learning foreign languages and playing the piano.



Rachel Smith
Kalispell, Montana

Rachel Smith is using her scholarship to attend Flathead Valley Community College, where she plans to study nursing. Rachel already has first-hand experience helping those in need. In 2008 she went to the African nation of Uganda, where she and fellow members of a youth organization helped children and spread awareness about AIDS.

Closer to home, Rachel is a volunteer at Camp Promise, where she assists handicapped children and adults.

“It is a terrific chance to get to experience life from a very different perspective,” Rachel said of her Camp Promise work. “It was an awesome experience that made me want to seek to help people even more, and nursing is an excellent way to do that.”

Outside of school and volunteer work, Rachel enjoys canoeing, ice skating, hiking, dancing, and spending time with her family and friends.



Lonnie Sullivan II
Woodstock, Georgia

Lonnie Sullivan II is using his scholarship to attend Morehouse University, where he plans to study biology. Lonnie has chosen this field because a degree in biology would open doors to a career in DNA sequencing, bioinformatics, nanotechnology or his current area of interest, forensics.

“For years now, I have set the goal of attending college and getting a degree in biology. I know I can make a difference in this field,” Lonnie wrote. “I can be the one to stop criminals, cure disease, or pioneer a new

technology. It gives me great comfort to know that I can have a great career that I love while helping to change the world.”

In addition to his school commitments, Lonnie has worked as a supermarket cashier for two years. When he has free time, he enjoys basketball, touch football and participating in community service activities.



Anna Woodall
Warsaw, Ohio

Anna Woodall is using her scholarship to attend the Ohio State University, where she plans to learn about hospital administration. Anna realized at an early age that she had strong coordination and management skills, but it was a mission trip to Mexico that set her on a different career path than she had originally planned.

“It was during this experience that I felt a spark for serving and meeting needs ignite into a passion,” she wrote. “Caught between the difference of my strengths and this passion, I searched to find a career that would allow

me to not only use my strengths but also work within the realm of my passion of caring for people. Hospital administration requires strengths in coordinating and management skills, and it also plays an essential role in the overall goal of providing people with proper health care services.”

When she has free time, Anna enjoys horseback riding, hiking, jogging and ballroom dancing.



Katrina Zahradka
St. Paul, Minnesota

Katrina Zahradka is using her scholarship to attend the University of Minnesota, where she plans on studying theatre arts and Italian. Katrina’s two main passions are circus arts and theatre. She enjoys performing and is an accomplished juggler and unicyclist. Katrina has also begun writing scripts and poetry, particularly classical rhyming poetry and sonnets, and plans to study abroad in Florence, Italy, where she will learn about commedia dell’arte, a form of slapstick comedy.

When she is at home, she enjoys spending time with her father, who makes swords, and her mother, who is a costumer. She is grateful to have been educated by her parents and by the American School, saying learning at home “is the kind of atmosphere I enjoy the most and was one of the reasons why I chose the American School in the first place. I felt it was most valuable to complete high school and be educated by my parents at the same time.”

Make your mark in annual stamp contest

American School students with an interest in art and wildlife are invited to participate in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest.

Each year the contest gives students the opportunity to draw, paint or sketch a North American waterfowl species. Students submit their works to their state competitions, and first-place winners from state competitions advance to the national contest. The winner of the national contest will have his or her image become the next Junior Duck Stamp, which is sold for \$5 at United States Post Offices. Proceeds from the sale of Junior Duck Stamps benefit state environmental and conservation education programs.

Visit <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck> for more information.

Besides the outstanding alumni profiled in this newsletter, we know there are many more American School students and graduates who are doing outstanding things of their own. If you would like to be featured in an upcoming edition of the *All American*, contact us at the postal or e-mail address at the end of this newsletter.

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