



Media Contact: Stephanie Baron

313.967.1039

News Release

DATE: April 16, 2010

Wayne County students win scholarships from Ficano's Vision Fund

Wayne County – Ninety high school students will be awarded \$500 college scholarships Wednesday from the Wayne County Vision Fund, a non-profit organization started by Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano.

The Vision Fund luncheon program starts at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday April 21 at the Atheneum Hotel, 1000 Brush, Detroit.

The fund has awarded nearly \$300,000 in scholarships. Applicants were required to have at least a 3.0 grade-point average, submit an essay and include recommendations from a principal or counselor.

The scholarship winners, chosen from 220 applicants, are high school seniors from across Wayne County with a wide range of academic interests including bio-medical engineering, medicine, communications, business, law and criminal justice.

Among the winners who are available for follow-up interviews are:

Teonna Gary of Detroit

Teonna is a senior at **Cass Technical High School** in Detroit where she carries a 3.65 grade point average. She plans to attend Michigan State University or Central Michigan University and study mass communications. Specifically she's interested in journalism or becoming a computer technician. She's described by her mentors and teachers as a leader, a high achiever and a young lady with integrity, morals and a heart filled with affection and empathy for others.



Teonna is the first among her three other siblings to attend college. She stated in her essay that both her parents are currently unemployed and lack the resources to pay for her college. Still she remains positive and upbeat. “What keeps me going,” Teonna said, “is the goal of walking across the stage, receiving my high school diploma and the arrival of the day when I leave home for college and the joy on my parents’ faces as they witness my accomplishments.”

Contact information for Teonna, 313.212.8550 (cell) or liz_appling@yahoo.com

Fatimoh Oyedele of Inkster

Fatimoh is a senior at **John Glenn High School** in Westland. She has earned a 3.9 grade point average and has been accepted to Wayne State University, Kettering University, Michigan Tech University and Michigan State University. Fatimoh, a member of the National Honor Society, plans to study bio-medical engineering. Her dreams are youthful and limitless: “I want to become a bio-medical engineer,” she wrote in her essay, “because not only does it give a person with a disability a chance of a normal life, it is also bringing our wildest imagination to life.”

Her forward-looking and energetic view for her future is remarkable given the tragedy that touched her and her family. Fatimoh’s father was shot and killed six years ago and just recently her mother was killed in a car accident. She lives with her two sisters, a niece and a family friend. She said in her essay that she does not want to burden her two sisters who are both in college. “I would like to be able to support myself in college.”

Her mother told her the key to success is education. And her commitment to scholastics comes clearly through a letter from her chemistry teacher, who wrote: “I have literally looked at her and wondered where her motivation comes from,” said Ms. Laidlaw. “Her capacity for and interest in science surpasses that of all other students I have had the pleasure to teach.”

Contact information for Fatimoh, 313.739.3202 (cell)

Erica Hernandez of Ecorse

Erica is a senior at **Melvindale High School**. She carries a 3.6 grade point average and is active in a variety of extra-curricular activities like cheerleading, participating in Students Against Drunk Driving and is the secretary for the Diversity Club.

Erica has been accepted at Michigan State University, Grand Valley State and Baker College. She plans to study medical and health services. She said in her essay that she will be the first in her family to pursue education after high school.



Both her parents came to the United States from Mexico seeking a better life. She describes her family as very traditional with a “long list of morals” and a “great sense of pride.” She credits her family for encouraging her to aim high, to be ambitious and “to become someone.” She has a maturity and a sense of self that exceeds her age. She ends her essay by saying: “My sisters look up to me and I want to pave a new path for them. I am determined to accomplish that and give back to them all they have done for me in my life.”

Contact information for Erica, 313.207.5210 (cell) or angeldc89@yahoo.com

Jimmy Kassis of Wayne

Jimmy is a senior at **Wayne Memorial High School** in the city of Wayne. He has earned a solid 3.86 grade point average while remaining active in athletics, captaining the varsity football and wrestling teams and running track too. Teachers, counselors and coaches describe Jimmy as a leader and a skilled athlete with solid moral standards.

He’s been accepted to Adrian College, Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State, Ferris State, Wayne State University and Western Michigan University.

Jimmy gets a lot of inspiration from his father who passed away. Money has been an issue ever since, Jimmy said in his essay. “I found odd jobs to earn some money, which I saved so I could use for college.” He knows what he wants to do and seems determined to do it. His ultimate goal is to earn a four year degree in criminal justice and eventually become an agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration. “To become a member of this agency will take years of hard work,” Jimmy said. “It’s because of my father’s desire to serve others that I want to go into law enforcement.”

Jimmy said he feels compelled to lock up drug dealers and other criminals to keep the streets safe in the community. They are admirable goals for a 17-year old being raised by a single mom. “Most of all,” Jimmy said, “it will be a legacy to my dad.”

Contact information for Jimmy, 734.658.5656 (cell) or kassisj52@gmail.com

##



