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Workers' Memorial Scholarships awarded for 2009

Tragedy brightened by the pursuit of success

Dozens of children each year in Oregon must cope with a parent being taken by a workplace death. The loss can have a profound effect on a family's ability to finance higher education.

An Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) program provides an opportunity to help surviving family members reach their educational goals. Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA) is honoring four Oregon students with Workers' Memorial Scholarship awards for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Oregon OSHA will honor the award recipients at a ceremony at 10:30 a.m. July 23, 2009, at the Labor and Industries Building in Salem. Members of the media are welcome to attend.

The recipients are:

Brittany Ford, Gresham

Ford plans to start this fall at Oregon State University and hopes to become a dietician. She has had an interest in nutrition since grade school, when she started reading labels. Ford ran cross country in high school.

Ford is a 2009 graduate of Gresham Barlow High School. She lost her father when a machine crushed him two weeks after her seventh birthday. This is Ford's first Workers' Memorial Scholarship. She is receiving a \$2,000 award.

Austin Stinson, Albany

Stinson plans to study culinary arts on the East Coast in the fall. With a passion for cooking, his goal is to become a high school culinary teacher.

Stinson is a 2008 graduate of South Salem High School and currently works at an upscale restaurant. His father was killed in 2003 while working on a Cascade Locks construction project. This is Stinson's first Workers' Memorial Scholarship award. He is receiving a \$1,500 award.

Brittiany Wilson, Oregon City

Wilson plans to attend Clackamas Community College this fall and would like to work in the youth corrections or probation field.

Wilson is a 2009 graduate of North Clackamas Christian High School. She has volunteered at a local hospital and makes it a habit to donate blood every six weeks. Her father was permanently disabled in a workplace accident when she was 5 years old. This is Wilson's first Workers' Memorial Scholarship award. She is receiving a \$1,500 award.

Marissa Becker, Molalla

Becker is starting graduate school this fall at the University of Montana. Once she earns a master's degree in health promotion, her goal is to work for a nonprofit organization to help fight childhood obesity.

Becker is a 2003 graduate of Molalla High School and was just entering college when her father died from an overexposure to metal dust. This is Becker's first Workers' Memorial Scholarship award. She is receiving a \$1,500 award.

Award recommendations are made by Oregon OSHA's Safe Employment Education and Training Advisory Committee, an advisory group with members from business, organized labor, and government. Oregon OSHA presents the awards annually to assist in the postsecondary education of spouses or children of permanently disabled or fatally injured workers. The 1991 Legislature established the Workers' Memorial Scholarship at the request of the Oregon AFL-CIO, with support from Associated Oregon Industries.

The Workers' Memorial Scholarship is open to any high school graduate, graduating high school senior, GED recipient, or current college undergraduate or graduate student who is a dependent or spouse of an Oregon worker who has been fatally injured or permanently disabled while on the job.

Applicants must be Oregon residents receiving fatality benefits, a dependent or spouse of a fatally injured worker, or the dependent or spouse of an Oregon worker who has incurred a permanent total disability and whose claim for workers' compensation benefits has been accepted.

Interest earned on a DCBS fund derived from Oregon OSHA civil fines and penalties funds the awards.

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Oregon OSHA, a division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, enforces the state's workplace safety and health rules and works to improve workplace safety and health for all Oregon workers. The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.orosha.org.