



Jobs for America's Graduates

Courtney Brown

Delan Fulgham

DaNadia Nicole Johnson

Juliet Jones

Jessica Laundry

De'Angelo McGregor

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2010 Smith Scholars

Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship Fund

May 15, 2010

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks to the JAG Board of Directors for establishing the Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship Fund as recognition of the many contributions and commitment of the only President and Chief Executive Officer of Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc. *(1980 to Current)*

Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship Fund

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KENNETH M. SMITH

President & Chief Executive Officer
Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc.

In recognition of his extraordinary leadership and service to Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc., since its inception in 1980, the JAG Board of Directors announced the establishment of the Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship Fund and the Smith Scholars Program. For years to follow, deserving high school graduates will be selected and recognized as Smith Scholars in their pursuit of a postsecondary education leading to career advancement opportunities.

Kenneth M. Smith has every right to be proud of the accomplishments of the JAG National Network toward achieving the collective vision of the JAG Board of Directors and the JAG State Organizations: "A Nation without Dropouts". The Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship Fund was announced by The Honorable John E. Baldacci, Governor of Maine and Chairman of the JAG National Board of Directors on behalf of the JAG Board of Directors on December 4, 2008.

Eight (8) JAG Graduates were recognized as 2009 Smith Scholars. The purpose of this publication is to acknowledge the ten (10) Smith Scholars that were selected from among eighty (80) applicants for the \$1,000 scholarships. The goal is to increase the number and amount of the scholarships as funds are provided by the JAG Board of Directors and the JAG National Network.

Mr. Smith developed the original program design, which is now one of the nation's largest and most successful programs for helping young people with academic and career barriers to success. Serving as Education Adviser to Governor Pete DuPont of Delaware, the JAG Model was designed and tested in the State of Delaware. In 2010, JAG operates in 33 states serving over 40,000 young people of promise in 850 high schools, middle schools, alternative education programs and community colleges with consistent and compelling results. For the Class of 2008, the JAG National Network achieved a graduation rate of 94 percent. Approximately 46 percent of JAG graduates in the Class of 2008 pursued a postsecondary education in hopes of taking full advantage of career advancement opportunities.

Over 600,000 high-risk youth have been served since the inception of JAG through six (6) program applications of the JAG Model—Middle School Program (7th and 8th Grades); Multi-Year Program (9th–12th Grades); Senior Program (12th Grade Only); Alternative Education Programs (9th–12th Grades); Out-of-School Programs (for high school dropouts); and the Early College Success Program.

In recognition of his knowledge of national employment and training issues, three Presidents have appointed Mr. Smith to national commissions. He was appointed in 1981 and again in 1983 by President Reagan as Chairman of the National Commission for Employment Policy. Mr. Smith also accepted an appointment by President Reagan to the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, where he had previously served under appointment by President Ford. President Nixon appointed Mr. Smith as Vice Chairman of the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children for the period 1973-76.

Mr. Smith holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations at American University. He resides with his wife, Nora, in Sarasota, Florida.



COURTNEY BROWN

2010 Smith Scholar

Courtney Brown

Hickman Mills High School
Kansas City, MO
Accountant or Pediatrician
Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA
GPA: 3.5
JAG Chapter President 2009-2010

I never thought a man from a projector screen could inspire me. If that man is President Barack Obama, then it can happen. Watching his “Back to School Speech” from a classroom projector, my spirit was fueled. The message he delivered was motivational, relative, and endearing.

Obama spoke to the struggling American youth. He understands the adversities that I and other teens like myself endure. The income deficiency and the absent of a father-figure are struggles of mine that he first hand had a perspective on. His mother raised him solely on her income but still managed to survive. My mother with just a high school education and entry paying job got me through school. My mother independently supported me and my sister in her income and she as well managed to survive. We are currently still in this circumstances and even with my school expenses steadily rising we still will strive just like Obama did. Obama’s father left him fatherless at the age of five. My father died when I was only four. He can genuinely emphasize the unfairness, loneliness, and sadness I felt growing up.

In spite of these tragic circumstances he says, “Where you come from doesn’t have to determine where you’ll end up.” That statement enlightens my soul. To me, he meant that just because I come out of a bad situation does not mean I have to continue to live in it. I have not only a choice, but an opportunity to enhance myself and my future. Any hardships or failures will not define me but cultivate my character. More importantly, a postsecondary education will provide me with this opportunity to better myself, my surrounding, and my community. Many African American students in 2009 cannot read nor do math on grade level. I dream to join with others in the community to change this phenomenon. I want to challenge and have a positive impact on this situation. I feel that it is my responsibility to empower the next generation with the education that most may not be able to receive.

I have also come to recognize and appreciate that education is rewarding. I have maintained an honorable GPA of 3.5, which has provided me with a merit. Recently, I was honored with an all expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. This involved leadership training with the opportunity to network with students across the nation. I do plan to keep this mind-set while I am enriching myself in a college education. My goals are to continue this same work ethic throughout a college career and become a successful leader. In my adulthood, I inspire to utilize my education to have some type of lasting impact on society.

In addition, Obama has a philosophy that I too have. He says, "Every single one of you has something to offer. And it is your responsibility to discover what that is. That's the opportunity an education can provide." I concur with this because as a senior with one month left, I feel I have not truly found my purpose. I know that everyone has a unique gift; you just have to broaden your horizon first to find it. I have participated numerous activities; dance, tennis, soccer, mock-trial, and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America). I have enjoyed every activity but I only feel my passion is in FBLA. Last year in FBLA, I placed 2nd in the accounting division. It was my first time competing and I thought maybe I had found my forte.

Now I plan to major in accounting at Clark Atlanta University. I hope that college will provide me with the answers as to if this is my purpose. If this is not my purpose then my next alternative is to pursue a career as a pediatrician. I love being around children. I also have been employed at a retirement home for almost three years. I have discovered something about myself during those three years, that I enjoy helping people. The genuine consideration and kind nature that a pediatrician possesses are the same characteristics I possess. I hope that this scholarship will aid me in these many endeavors. I promise the time and money invested in me with me worthwhile.

Obama's speech was encouraging to my goals, my success, and my future. He reminded me that people like me can overcome adversities and excel. Then move forward to become successful people like himself. The beliefs that Obama and I share are imperative to the purpose of educating me. The scrutiny for my purpose fuels me in the pursuit of education. I'm determined to be a success like Obama because if he can do it, so can I.

Respectively,
Courtney Brown



DELAN FULGHAM

2010 Smith Scholar

Delan Fulgham

Lewiston High School
Lewiston, ME
Business Administration
Central Maine Community College, Lewiston, ME
GPA: 2.5
JAG President (3 years)

A formal education has never been a priority in my family. In fact no one in my immediate family has ever attended college. It wasn't that it wasn't considered, it was a matter of finances and not having the resources available. Fortunately my parents did instill a strong work ethic in all of us and I believe the combination of a formal education and a strong work ethic will guarantee a future with no bounds.

At the age of twelve I knew I was interested in business. For several years I had my own lemonade stand outside of my grandparent's house. My little brother and I would stay out in front of the house for hours, flagging cars down and asking people to buy our lemonade. It worked! Car after car would stop for a nice, cold glass of our summer special. The thrill of making money excited me and I often sought opportunities to make that happen. I'm also a lover of music and helped my uncle disc jockey at local functions in my early teens. He taught me all the tricks I needed to be a great DJ. Now, I have my own business and disc jockey at private and public events. It's a great job! I have also volunteered my time at the annual MS walk for the past three years and they always ask me to come back.

In realizing my strengths I landed a position at CVS Pharmacy and have been there for the past two years. I knew that in order to stand out I would need to show that I didn't have to ask what to do next. I was always dusting shelves, straightening things out and helping customers. Through demonstrated hard work and initiative, that did not go unnoticed, my manager promoted me to a shift supervisor position this past year. My vocational classes in marketing and entrepreneurship have also enhanced my existing skills. I have been fortunate to have had this experience and now know that I am headed in the right direction and hope to pursue my degree in business administration. Something I know I love and am good at.

This scholarship is important to me not only because of its monetary value but because I am a person who likes to work for the benefits I reap. It is important to me that I maintain my own high standards of excellence. I like to show that I am a man of my word and follow through on all of my commitments. I don't think that I have ever said that I would do something and didn't follow through. If I am chosen for this scholarship I will show that I can and will continue to do the right thing, maintain my grades and attendance, and continue to be an active member of my community.



"For several years I had my own lemonade stand outside of my grandparent's house. My little brother and I would stay out in front of the house for hours, flagging cars down and asking people to buy our lemonade. It worked! Car after car would stop for a nice, cold glass of our summer special. The thrill of making money excited me and I often sought opportunities to make that happen."

--Delan Fulgham Quote

DANADIA NICOLE JOHNSON

2010 Smith Scholar

DaNadia Nicole Johnson

Cedar Shoals High School
Athens, GA
Pediatric Physician Assistant
Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA
GPA: 3.6
JAG Vice President—Career Preparation

As high school seniors are slowly approaching graduation, the importance of a college education is constantly being stressed by teachers and parents. Many of my peers may hear this information and not take action; but I on the other hand, realize the importance of a post-secondary education. I desire to further my education so that I may obtain knowledge that will help others, and will help me in becoming a more productive member of society. Obtaining a degree from a post-secondary institution will provide me with many wonderful opportunities to meet new people, improve my leadership skills, and discover other abilities that I never noticed before. Additionally, it will provide a diverse atmosphere so that I may interact with other students from all over the world. A post-secondary education will allow me to learn new things about other cultures, ultimately mold me into a more well-rounded person to become more globally competitive and self-sufficient.

Statistics obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor predict we will all need some sort of post-secondary education. While I have a love and hunger for knowledge, I also know that in order to help others, I have to first help myself. With a Bachelor's degree, statistics show that those who are college educated are likely to earn between \$10,000-\$15,000 *more* per year, than those with just a High School Diploma. In order to live even a comfortable life and be able to compete with other countries who are highly technologically advanced, we are all going to need to advance our education.

While obtaining a post-secondary education, my ultimate career goal is to obtain a degree in biology and an advance degree in medicine from a highly reputable educational institution leading to a career in pediatrics.

Achieving these career goals are of great importance to me. My goals stem around my love for medicine and my love children and I want to be a position to provide top medical care at a low economic cost.

Furthermore, this scholarship is truly of great importance to me in being able to achieve these goals. I am from a single-parent household. I have watched my mother struggle to just barely manage to get me through public high school. I want to be able to get the financial assistance that I will need to further my education without my mother continuing to struggle.

My mother has medical conditions that also keep us from being able to have all that I would need to pay for college. Not only would I love to help develop a cure for these medical conditions, I would truly love to take some one the load and stress off my Mom which contribute to these ailments. This would be truly a miracle to be ready for college and be able to help cover my college cost and take on some of the responsibility. I love Jobs for Georgia Graduates and Jobs for America's Graduates because they care about those students who otherwise, might "fall through the cracks." As I hear teachers say. I do not want to be one of those students. The Ken Smith Scholarship stands for excellence in education, leadership overcoming obstacles and giving back to your communities. It would be an honor to receive this award and be able to fulfill my dreams to help children also be healthy and productive members of society; just as JAG and JGG are helping me. This scholarship means the difference between me possibly not reaching those goals and is crucial to removing so much of the stress that comes with being financially unable to pay for a college education. This scholarship is truly the "critical and urgent care" needed to lead me to my career dreams and success in medicine!

-- By DaNadia Johnson



JULIET JONES

2010 Smith Scholar

Juliet Jones

Marietta High School

Marietta, GA

Addiction Counselor, Work in Prisons

Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA

GPA: 2.8

JAG Vice President—Career Preparation

Education is the process of gaining knowledge or skill for a profession. Education is very essential in order to pursue any type of career whether you want to be a lawyer, doctor, artist, teacher, and even a mother. From Kindergarten to 12th grade those thirteen years seem to take forever but before you know it, you're turning your tassel. However, graduation is just a checkpoint you haven't reached the finish line just yet. Education beyond high school is essential because there aren't many jobs for the uneducated. Going to college is important to me because I feel I have only grown my roots to my tree of life. College prepares you for real life, teaches you how to be an adult, and introduces you to reality. Your college education depends on you and you only. Being attentive, dedicated, and working hard will help you be successful in college.

After receiving my masters in Psychology at Valdosta State University I plan to become an Addiction Counselor. I hope to work in a prison or jail with criminals suffering from problems from drugs, alcohol, or sex. I chose this career because these criminals are victims themselves and they need a helping hand. There is a deeper meaning to why they chose to become addicted to drugs, and I feel it is my duty to find the reason, find the cure, and save lives. I've been told that I am a straight forward, easy going person so most of my friends come to me with their problems. I recently received Employee of the Month because the customers at my job (Rite Aid) filled out customer service surveys and complimented me on my work performance. Receiving this award show I take pride in my work and got the extra mile to develop relationships with my customers. I plan to carry these skills when I become an addiction counselor, I want my clients to trust me and help them recover.

My parents have stressed the importance of education since day one. So attending VSU and receiving my degree is very dear to my heart. I am working extremely hard to keep my grades up and also earn other scholarships to ensure that I have my education paid for. I hope the dedication and hard work and leadership capabilities I have demonstrated over my high school career will convince you that I am worthy enough to receive the Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship for the 2010–2011 school year.



JESSICA LAUNDRY

2010 Smith Scholar

Jessica Laundry

Woodsville High School
Woodsville, NH
Elementary Education and Special Education
Keene State College, Keene, NH
GPA: 2.9
JAG Reporter and Secretary

Receiving a scholarship would open the door to advancing my education. My biggest fear in life is not being able to finance my post-secondary education. A college degree would pave the road to a successful life, completely different from the one I have lived.

Growing up on welfare and disability checks was a great burden. There was never enough money for school supplies or other basic needs. We were continuously evicted and moved within the same few towns. I grew up without a television, phone, computer or a vehicle. My lifestyle motivated me to do my best, set high goals and take steps to achieve them.

In June, I will be the first of five children to graduate high school and only the second person in my immediate family. If I receive this scholarship I would become the first member of my family to go to college. I'm already more than halfway there. I met the requirements to be accepted at my first choice of colleges. The only thing holding me back is the expenses.

My career goal is to obtain my Masters Degree in Elementary Education and minor in Special Education. Keene State College offers a special Masters program. I hope that I will follow that program and get my degree in five years.

Education became important to me at a young age. I loved to learn and quickly grasped the concept that good grades got recognition. I had a younger brother who had behavioral problems and an older sister who was mentally disabled. I taught my sister her times tables and continue to work with her on spelling and grammar. The feeling I get when I have successfully taught something to another person is incomparable with anything else.

I have been involved in the mentoring program within my school. Both years I choose to mentor the third grade. I feel that it is an age group that understands more concepts and is easier to teach. Through the JAG program I had the opportunity to work with a challenged group of preschoolers for the summer. It was a great experience that began my exploration of working with elementary children that need more guidance. I have even had the change to help some high schoolers that struggle in particular subjects. I cannot stand to see someone fail due to poor study habits or simply not understanding the material. So I always offer to help them study or find ways to make them look at the material in different perspectives.

Without a scholarship my goal of breaking the family chain cannot be reached. My vision for my future is to have a stable career and finally not only afford basic needs but also acquire the things I want. I know this can be attained by going to college, getting a degree and entering the career world. I refuse to settle for a nine to five job for the rest of my life. "Just getting by" is not the way I want to live my life.

The key to my happiness I have found is by becoming a teacher. When you teach a child, they will use that knowledge for the rest of their life. Teachers make lasting impressions with children and can form a relationship much different than that of a family member or friend. I want nothing more from life than to know that I helped hundreds of children learn skills that they will use forever.

I have dreams that I will never give up on. Nobody should have to put a price on their education. Going to college is the key to changing my life forever. I have to prove to my family and myself that I can do this. All that I need is the help to afford my future.



DE'ANGELO MCGREGOR

2010 Smith Scholar

De'Angelo McGregor

East High School
Des Moines, IA
Mechanical Engineering
Iowa State University, Ames, IA
GPA: 3.2
JAG Vice President

My name is De'Angelo McGregor and I believe that I should be a recipient of the Smith Scholarship. I currently attend East High School and I will be the first person in my family to complete my high school education. I have worked very hard to maintain a grade point average of 3.2 throughout my high school career while participating as the Vice President of Iowa-Jobs for America's Graduates (I-JAG), lettering in tennis, teaching children's Bible Study at our Church and working part-time at QuikTrip.

Our family suffered financial hardship this year when my mother lost her job at Qwest Communications and my stepfather lost his job at UPS because of the economy. Due to this loss, we experienced a significant decrease in our household income. To help my parents, I dealt with these challenges by picking up more hours to purchase my own school supplies, clothes, and pay for a household bill. This unfortunate situation has helped me to become much more independent and dedicated to achieving my academic goals. Although they are both currently working, their income will not allow them to cover my college tuition because their income was cut in half.

I noticed how difficult it has been for my stepfather to find a job because he does not have a college degree. This has helped me to see the importance of furthering my education after high school. I have a younger sister that is watching me as I become an adult, so I am very careful to ensure that I am a positive influence in her life. I tutor her after school so that my parents can pick up extra hours. I figure if I can set a good example for her, she will want to continue her education and be successful in life.

I have chosen the Engineering Program because Iowa State has the best engineering program. I understand that this is one of the toughest degrees to obtain; however, I love a challenge. If I am able to maintain my GPA with the struggles our family has experienced in the last year, I know I will be able to exceed Iowa State's expectations as well as my own. I have never liked the feeling of failure so I never give up. I constantly look for ways to improve. I love perfection and the feeling of doing a task correctly. Not to mention, the name of Iowa State carries recognition and will assist me at becoming gainfully employed upon graduating.

I have worked extremely hard and have never given up when things were the hardest for us. I deserve this award because I will have accomplished something no one in my family ever has. All of my family members dropped out and gave up. I would like to thank all of the Smith's Scholarship and i-JAG staff for giving me this opportunity to even be considered in this scholarship award. Have a good day and God bless you.



"I have chosen the Engineering Program because Iowa State has the best engineering program. I understand that this is one of the toughest degrees to obtain; however, I love a challenge"
-- De'Angelo McGregor Quote

MARIA MOSQUEDA

2010 Smith Scholar

Maria Mosqueda

Chattooga High School
Summerville, GA
Physician's Assistant
Young Harris College, Young Harris, GA
GPA: 3.3
JAG Member-at-Large

I have always been told about the importance of college and how it can make a difference in my life and the people around me. An education in college will open many new doors for me including the choice of what I want to be and the ability to enjoy the path I choose. My life has come a long way from where it began. I was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. My family struggled to provide for me and my three brothers. My father moved to the United States while my mother was expecting me to find work and provide a better life for us. When I was seven, my mother moved to the United States to join my father. I am grateful that I came to the United States, because if I hadn't I would not have had the opportunity that I have now in continuing my education and pursue my dream of becoming a nurse. In Mexico, college is not really an option for members of my extended family. The opportunity is just not there. In fact, most families do not even consider college. Children just go to work when they reach a certain age or their families need the money – not to spend money sending their children to school.

I will be the first in my family to go to college. I am determined to complete my degree and show other members of my family that it is possible to further your education. I feel that I came along way and am proud to say that I am excited about starting college, an opportunity I am very grateful to have. Going to college has become my priority because I have learned that without an education you can't go far in life. Getting a college education will be a gateway to more opportunities – more opportunities to higher paying jobs and more options as to what you can be and become. I want to make something of myself and be someone. It's worth all the hard work that it will take for me to reach my goal.

My dream is to one day become a physician's assistant. I plan to become a registered nurse first and then continue my education to be a physician's assistant. Becoming a physician's assistant will fit in on what I enjoy doing best which is helping others. Someday I want to go back to my country, Mexico, and be able to help out those in need that cannot afford medical help. I think that nursing will go and fit into my personality of who I am. I like helping others when they are in need and I am glad to say that I'll be there for them. It makes me feel better about myself when I help someone and I don't expect anything in return. I want to be able to help those children you would see on television that are in hospitals for cancer, illnesses they don't deserve to have. I will not only be of help medically but I want to help them out emotionally. They can confide in me as a friend so they can have a shoulder to lean on when confronted with a tough situation.

Getting this scholarship will be one step closer to reaching my goal of going to college. I am thankful to be getting scholarships because I would not be able to do this on my own since my parents would not be able to help me financially. My dad and older brother is the only one in the family working to support my mom and four siblings. I was able to find a job last year to help pay for my expenses during my senior year. I work part-time at a local shoe store to keep my father from having to buy the things I need during this last year of school. I have applied at my college for a work-study position to help pay for the extra things I will need while in school. I am excited about leaving in August to begin college. This will be one more step to achieving my dream!



DARIUS PARKER

2010 Smith Scholar

Darius Parker

East Chicago Central High School
East Chicago, IN
Physical Therapist
University of Indianapolis, IN
GPA: 3.26
JAG Member-at-Large

My name is Darius Parker. I am a 2010 graduating senior with high aspirations for my life. I believe I should be selected to receive this scholarship because of my achievements and strong desire to overcome my adversities. I know I am deserving, as well as needful of this scholarship to attain my goals in life.

As a life long resident of East Chicago, I have overcome obstacles and did not succumb to the negative life style of many other young men in my community. I grew up in a single-parent home with the only two strong male figures in my life being my uncle and grandfather, in which I lost early in my life due to untimely deaths. This left my mother to raise two young men in a drug infested, gang banging, and violent neighborhood. Although my mother did all she could to keep her sons out of the grasp of our surroundings, she fell short and became addicted to drugs. Due to her addiction, my brother and I became wards of the state for a time. At a very young tender age, I had to make some concrete decisions for my life. It was then that I proclaimed to make sure that I do the best I can in school, go to college to assure that I do not fall into the same circumstances as my mother. During the time of my mother's addiction, my brother and I had to grow up fast. We became the parent and had to take care of ourselves. I had to make sure I woke my self up for school, fix my own food, and wash my school uniform I had to wear to school. My sixth grade teacher insisted that I had a learning disability; I refused to accept that as truth. I worked even harder and developed study skills that have allowed me to comprise a 3.26 GPA. As I grew older, I became interested in sports and that was my outlet to deal with my life. During this time I developed my interest in Athletic Training as a career.

It is very important for me to continue my education so that I can get a good quality job to make a better life for my mother as they get up in there old age. Through my life I have watched my mother break her back to try to make sure I am taken care of and have the necessary thing I need for my basic survival. My life goal is to attend college and major in Athletic Training and then obtain my doctoral degree in Physical Therapy. I think this scholarship would help achieve my dreams and goals and give me the money I need to get a great education. I would use this opportunity to serve as a positive role model to inspire the youth in various communities; to let them know that anything is possible when you work hard, have faith in yourself and allow obstacles to strengthen you and not deter you from what you can accomplish. I believe no child should have to live their life experience without knowing there are so many other choices in life.



"My life goal is to attend college and major in Athletic Training and then obtain my doctoral degree in Physical Therapy. I think this scholarship would help achieve my dreams and goals and give me the money I need to get a great education. I would use this opportunity to serve as a positive role model to inspire the youth in various communities; to let them know that anything is possible when you work hard, have faith in yourself and allow obstacles to strengthen you and not deter you from what you can accomplish. I believe no child should have to live their life experience without knowing there are so many other choices in life." --Darius Parker Quote

LAUREN ROBERTS

2010 Smith Scholar

Lauren Roberts

Clarksburg High School
Clarksburg, TN
Registered Nurse
Jackson State Community College, Jackson, TN
GPA: 3.125
JAG President

The professional aspiration that I have set for myself is to become a Registered Nurse. My mother is a Licensed Practical Nurse in a pediatric clinic. She loves her work, but I have seen firsthand how her education has limited her work choices. My goal is to become a registered nurse so I can be better prepared for my future. The nursing field is one of many meeting the needed demand in workforce today. I feel I am the best applicant for the Ken Smith Scholarship because I am a hard worked, dedicated Jobs for America's Graduates' member and a compassionate person.

My dad was disabled by Multiple Sclerosis when I was in 5th grade. I have helped with his needs which are many. Being exposed to both my mom's work and to my dad's hospital stays, I am sure I want to help others by being a nurse. The nursing field offers endless possibilities, one of which I discovered through my Jobs for Tennessee Graduates class at Clarksburg School.

Jobs for Tennessee Graduates has given me the opportunity to excel above and beyond my greatest expectations this school year. I have had the privilege of setting career goals, challenging others in our region at officer elections and career development conference, experiencing and succeeding through public speaking, and most importantly, networking with amazing leaders from across the state of Tennessee, including the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, Mr. James G. Neeley.

This scholarship will allow me the opportunity to pursue a career in nursing while continuing to implement the leadership skills attained through my JTG experiences. The prospect to become a registered nurse and care for others would be a dream come true.



MACY ROPP

2010 Smith Scholar

Macy Ropp

Roberts High School

Roberts, MT

Pediatric Nurse

Montana State University, Bozeman, MT

GPA: 3.95

JAG Member-at-Large

My favorite toy to play with was my amazing ally doll that I got my eighth birthday that year. I was having a hard time getting my cursive F just right. I was just starting to learn how to ride my bike without training wheels. I could now ride a horse all by myself, although many times my mother was right behind me in the saddle. My biggest worry that week was if the ski instructors would let me ski down Miami, the easiest run on the mountain, by myself. It was the morning of March 11, 2000, the day of our elementary school ski trip. I remember it like it was yesterday. The sky had never been so blue, the sun had never been so bright, and the smile on my mom's face that morning had never been so big. I was all bundled up and ready to go. My mom was meeting us up on the mountain, she was helping watch over the small kindergarten kids who had never skied before, and this included my sister. My mom helped my sisters and I get out skis rented and on. My brother was already gone and on the mountain. My mom told each of us to save a ski run for her before the day ran out; little did we all know that the day would run out before it even started. I hadn't finished my first ski run when my second grade teacher came and took me to my mother's van where my sisters were waiting. My teacher drove us to the hospital and we waited and waited. I never wanted to leave my mother's side because I knew each minute I was gone from her was another minute I could never get back. I will never forget the moment my dad walked into the waiting room, bent down on his knees, looked me in the eyes with tears running down his face, and told me my mother was no longer here. As an eight year old, I laid my head on her chest which was covered by her hospital gown, held her cold still hand, and cried. Each time I walked out of my room I believed and wished and hoped that she would be there like she always was. Each time our front door opened I pictured her walking through it, but because of a brain aneurism that would never be possible again.

I made a promise to myself the night my dad told me my mother was no longer here. I promised myself that I would change the world someday and make my mom proud. I promised myself that one day I would be the nurse who would help save a woman's life and change the picture for a little girl who was waiting just like I was. I want to make a difference. That's exactly why I am choosing my future course of study. Once I graduate from high school I plan on attending Montana State University of Bozeman in the nursing field. I would eventually like to move into the field of pediatrics. I love children, and nothing in the world can beat the sound of a child laughing. It would make me the happiest person on earth if I knew that because of me a child was able to laugh again.

My mom was a teacher, my coach, my mentor, my hero, and above all my best friend. My mother's death has made me the person I am today. Her death has made me strong and taught me some of the most vital life lessons. I was just a little girl at the time but I believe I have grown into a young woman my mother would be proud of. Things aren't always going to be fair, that's just the way it is but someone once told me you usually get what you give. I plan to give as much of myself as I can. I would like to think that when I leave, the person I was made a difference. I want to look back and know that because of me the world is a better place.

I know that to achieve all that is possible we must attempt the impossible. My dreams and goals in life are big. They are as big as my heart and my desire to be all that I can be. I know God has given me only once life so I plan to fit as much as I can into my time here on earth. I want to touch as many people's lives as I can and change them for the better. Some people have the mindset that the world owes them something but I believe we owe something to the world. I owe it the world and the people of the world to be the best possible person I can be.

Losing my mom has not been easy, I think about her everyday and its hard after every game when I watch all my teammates go hug their moms, and it was hard for me in elementary when every May we made mother's day gifts and I always knew that even though the teachers let me make one, I would have no one to give it to. And this year at graduation when we all get to hand roses to our mothers and grandmothers I will have one less rose than every one of my classmates, but I know my Mom's looking down and watching me every day and I couldn't be prouder to be called her daughter. I would like to believe she would say the same thing about being my mother. This is my main reason for choosing my future course of study to make her proud, my family proud, my school proud, and my community proud.

I will make some big decisions in my life the next year that will change my life forever. The events in my life have made my goals for my future and career choice an easy decision. The next three years of my life will be focused on excelling in college. The nursing field is very competitive. I plan on setting my goals high, including remaining in the top 10% of my classes. I am happy with the choices I have made. No matter what happens in my life, I have confidence in my ability to make the right choices. I think what is more important is not what we become but how we become it. The rest of my life is being shaped right now with the choices I make and the person I decide to be. This is just the beginning. The rest of my life starts now. The world is waiting.

All my life, I have lived on a ranch. Because of the drought and other factors, the hard work my family and I put in every day often times does not benefit us financially. My father being a single dad to four children has worked the past 25 years just to make ends meet. As a full-time student and sports athlete, I also work as a waitress during the school year and summer so I can help with our family and farm expenses. By working and living on a ranch my whole life, I have developed a great work ethic and learned of dedication not only to my family, our farm but life in general. I have applied my strong work ethic to my education, always keeping above a 3.9 GPA throughout high school and I exhibit my dedication in my community through my many activities I'm involved in.

I believe my dream of becoming a pediatric nurse can be reached through hard work and determination. I have worked hard through school, and prepared myself educationally as much as I possibly could. The only factor that remains between me and this dream is money.

Financially this goal is out of reach. Bozeman charges \$5,988 for tuition, \$7,380 for room and board, and an average of \$1,100 for books and supplies. This is a total of \$14,468 per year without including the cost of any personal and miscellaneous things like gas and food. I am fully prepared to do whatever I need to do to make sure my goals of attending college are met but there is a huge financial gap. Because of my family's income if we want to go to college we fund every cent. I've worked at a restaurant since I was 14 and saved what I did not have to contribute to our family but this is no where near my expenses for college. Whatever I do not cover with scholarships and my own personal savings, I will have to take out in student loans. I promise you when I am given the opportunity to attend college and achieve my dream of becoming a pediatric nurse I will dedicate myself and work extremely hard to remain in the top percentage of my college classes. I will not fail I can promise you that.

