

NPEF AWARDS EIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2006-2007

For the second year, the Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) awarded academic Health Education scholarships to deserving students in the northern plains region. Forty-three high school students applied for the seven \$500 scholarships. NPEF received applications from students in three states...South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska. Awards were based on GPA, academic merit, extracurricular activities, health-care related activity, 2 letters of recommendation, and planned health-care or eye-related course of study.

Because NPEF believes strongly in supporting educational advancement as our previous winners progress in their studies, a "Continuing Scholar" award was initiated in 2006. This award was available to former scholarship winners continuing in a healthcare-related course of study.

Here's a snapshot of the seven high school students awarded **\$500 Health Education scholarships**.



Erica A. Ostenson, graduate of Wright Jr-Sir High School, Wright, WY, is studying Pre-Optometry at the University of Mary in Bismarck,

ND. She has two older sisters attending college and a younger brother in high school. Maintaining a 4.0 GPA, Erica served as President of the National Honor Society and was named Valedictorian of her graduation class. She was named to the All-State basketball team in 2006 and holds school records for highest field goal percentage and highest three-point percentage in a season. She also participated in volleyball and track. Her volleyball coach's recommendation emphasized

that Erica "works extremely hard at everything and accepts nothing less than her best." In addition to many other volunteer activities, Erica worked at camps in Montana and North Dakota for physically and mentally challenged persons. Her interest in Optometry began when she job-shadowed a local optometrist.



Maggie M. Skiles plans to major in Pre-Medicine and eventually hopes to specialize in Pediatric Ophthalmology. She chose this specialty because

she and 2 siblings had congenital eye defects and, during years of treatment, she was influenced by Dr. Allan Eisenbaum, former Director of Pediatric Ophthalmology at Children's Hospital in Denver to study Ophthalmology. She also plans to minor in Spanish so she can treat Hispanic patients. A 4.0 graduate of Scottsbluff Senior High School, Scottsbluff, NE, Maggie is attending Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, KY. She will also be swimming for the University's Division I Swimming team. She credits the "discipline, dedication, goal-orientation, ability to work with others, time management, and the completion of rigorous work outs" associated with swimming as integral to her academic success. Other volunteer activities include drug-and-alcohol-free programs (REACH) with adolescents and grade school children, teaching Spanish and swimming to young children, and tutoring. Maggie has won numerous swimming and academic awards. Her family also has two other siblings attending college this year.



Registered Nursing is the career choice for **Dixie L. Kittelson** of Hayti, SD. She attends SD State University at Brookings. As

a senior in high school, she did a 5-week Health Science Internship and job shadowing in 7 departments at Watertown Prairie Lakes Hospital. She has also completed a 40-hour Certified Nursing Assistant training program and helped with National Honor Society-sponsored blood drives. A 3.997 GPA graduate of Hamlin High School in Hayti, SD, Dixie has also participated in several levels of student government, including serving as Senior Class President. She has served as a Peer Helper; played golf, volleyball, and shooting sports; and assisted with 4-H leadership and programs. Her letters of recommendation cite her strong work ethic, integrity, positive attitude, willingness to help out or try new things, and close involvement with community and family.



With a goal to become an eye doctor, **Alicia A. Schieffer** planned to volunteer at an eye clinic this past summer to get eye-care experience prior

to her studies in Biology and Spanish at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion this fall. She volunteered for 4 years at a Yankton nursing home, helping residents with many activities. Alicia also led fundraisers for troops in Iraq, a local homeless shelter, hurricane Katrina victims, the families of both a former teacher and a former student with cancer, and the

family of a fallen soldier. Her 3.8 GPA at Yankton High School, Yankton, SD, earned her National Honor Society and Who's Who Among High School Students status. Other honors include Science Olympiad State Finalist Award, and many National History Day Awards. "I love learning about health and medicine. Giving help and assistance to others is an inspiration to me", said Alicia.

Working at the Gordon Vision Center after school each day helped **McKinzie K Schmidt** decide to study Pre-Optometry at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. At Gordon-Rushville High School in



Gordon, NE, Dixie graduated with a 4.0 GPA, was a leader in student government and National Honor Society, participated in Quiz Bowl all

four years, and received many honors in both basketball and volleyball. She was active on the Gordon Community Youth Foundation, providing healthy activity alternatives for students in a drug and alcohol-free environment. Education is valued in McKinzie's family: siblings include one who is an Audiologist, another in Dental school this fall, and another who is a college Sophomore; plus her mother is a Special Education teacher. Her school Superintendent praised her, saying "She represents everything that is right with today's youth; hard working, dedicated, possesses high moral values, very intelligent, and caring."



Rhianna M. Tuchscherer attends SD State University in Brookings, studying pre-pharmacy. Her goal is to graduate

with a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree. For three years in high school, she participated on the Nani O'Hana Cancer Walk team and helped with various fundraisers for cancer research. Rhianna was an active member of 4-H for 11 years and the variety of activities have helped her "give back to a community that has offered me an incredible number of opportunities", she says. At Milbank High School in Milbank, SD, Rhianna was an honor student with a GPA of 4.1 and was named to the National Honor Roll and Who's Who Among American High School Students. She also participated in choir, band, gymnastics, forensics, and FFA all 4 years. A gymnastics injury requiring surgery ended her senior season prematurely. Despite this, her coach said "As quick as Rhianna could, she found ways to contribute to the team, such as coaching younger gymnasts while sitting in a chair, and coming to meets to encourage and be a leader for her team. This was not an isolated case. It is truly an example of who Rhianna is."



A talented musician, **Kelsea L. Barondeau** has also excelled academically and athletically. She plays alto saxophone, keyboard, and piano and was a

3-time trophy winner in the Aberdeen Area Music Contest in piano. A graduate of Frederick High School in Frederick, SD, with a 4.0 GPA, Kelsea has won numerous awards in math and science, as well as being a varsity letter winner in cross country (6 years), track (5 years), and basketball (5 years). She also served as team captain in each sport since she was a sophomore. Her interest in Optometry was piqued when her 8-year-old younger sister got her first pair of glasses and was amazed at seeing Christmas lights clearly. Kelsea planned to volunteer and observe at an area optometrist's office during

the 2006 summer, prior to beginning Optometry studies at Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD. "Kelsea's high school accomplishments lead me to expect great things from her in college and her career after college", her music teacher wrote.

A Look at the Continuing Health Education Scholarship Winner



Elise J. In't Veld of Belle Fourche, SD, received the NPEF \$500 "Continuing Health Education Scholar" award. She is in her second year of studies in Biology (Pre-Professional)

at SD State University in Brookings, SD. Elise was highly recommended this year by her Calculus II teacher and her volleyball assistant coach as dedicated, knowledgeable, a leader with a "can-do attitude", and an encouragement to other students. Her coach also praised her 4.0 GPA, saying, "No other first-year player can boast that accomplishment. Elise has a drive to be great at whatever she sets her mind to accomplish."

In her original 2005 scholarship application, Elise wrote about her academic and athletic accomplishments, her involvement with Special Olympics and youth programs, and her families' involvement in caring for her sibling with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Regarding her healthcare-related future goals, she stated "I have been interested in a career as an ophthalmologist since I was in 7th grade and will continue to work my hardest to insure my goal is met."

The Northern Plains Eye Foundation congratulates all eight of our Health Education Scholarship winners and wishes them success as they pursue their studies.