

Our BIAWA 2015 Academic Scholarship Recipients!

Meagan McGrath and Bill Hortenstine are the recipients of the Em Finlay Western Washington Scholarship



As a mother and full-time student, Meagan McGrath has certainly faced a lot of difficulty since her traumatic brain injury from a car accident in 2001. While working through these difficulties, she has maintained exemplary marks in all of her classes as she pursues her Associates degree at Skagit Valley College. Meagan hopes to obtain a degree in Rehabilitation Therapy, so she can provide directly for the Brain Injury community. Her professors are confident in her ability to succeed and commend her on her "wonderful sense of humor, which contributes significantly to success in the kind of work she is planning to pursue".

After living with a Brain Injury for over 20 years, Bill Hortenstine decided to follow advice he had given numerous times to his support group members and follow his dreams of pursuing a degree. While pursuing his dual Bachelor's degree in psychology and biochemistry at Evergreen State College, Bill has made an enormous effort to develop a support group for fellow students with brain injuries. He has coordinated both on- and off-campus resources to ensure those who seek services have them available. It has been noted by Evergreen State College that Bill "has been very generous in offering his support and knowledge to benefit his fellow students".



Kyle Hogarty and DJ Davis are the recipients of the Eastern Washington Scholarship.



In 2012, Hailey Hole sustained two brain injuries in a short period of time. The first was a collision with opponents in a soccer game, and the second was when she was rear-ended in a car accident. The combined effects of these two incidents left Hailey with noticeable cognitive deficits as well as a Chiari malformation on her brain. No longer allowed to play soccer due to her head injuries, Hailey has decided to align her passion for athletics with her passion for journalism. She will dedicate herself to a career in sports journalism and broadcasting and will pursue a degree at Arizona State University to do so. Her teachers are confident in her ability to succeed, as they have witnessed her to “be a take-charge person who successfully developed plans for her own learning and implemented them flawlessly.

DJ Davis is considered "a strong leader, yet with a humble and gentle spirit." He continues to exemplify these characteristics after sustaining a Traumatic Brain Injury in a near-fatal car accident in 2013. Since the accident, DJ has worked very hard to graduate from Selah High School on time and continue taking classes through the Yakima Valley Community College's (YCCC) Running Start program. After he completes his Associate's degree in the Arts at YCCC, he hopes to transfer to a 4-year institution to pursue a degree in psychology or mental health counseling. DJ is also interested in learning American Sign Language. These are just the building blocks that DJ needs to provide others with the "encouragement and faith as they face hopeless times," according to his high school counselor."



Erin Manhardt is the recipient of the Higher Education/Professional Scholarship.



Despite being a passionate hockey player while growing up, Erin Manhardt was forced to hang up her skates after sustaining three concussions in one year, followed by a car accident that exacerbated her symptoms. Despite a difficult recovery, Erin has found a passion in helping others deal with similar injuries. For the past two summers, she has worked with the University of Washington TBI Model Systems, spoken to coaches and athletes about concussion, and volunteered at the "Love Your Brain" camp in Vermont. Since graduating with her Bachelor's degree from Washington State University, Erin has been accepted to the Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling program at Western Washington University. She hopes to use her degree to work with other Traumatic Brain Injury survivors and bettering the lives of those in the community.

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