

Enriching Lives

The SSA Foundation Scholarship continues to make a difference.

By John Dunlap

A year ago, Shannon Young was beginning to wonder if college was going to happen for her. Money in her family was tight and—unless some sort of miracle occurred—she likely wasn't going to be able to go to college at all.

And then it happened: Young was one of those chosen to receive a SSA Foundation Scholarship and, suddenly, attending the University of North Carolina at Charlotte became a reality.

Even better news for Young, she has become a two-time winner. The \$2,500 she receives from the 2014 SSA Foundation Scholarship awards will take care of her sophomore year at UNC-Charlotte. For the daughter of Sharon Young, who works for Morningstar Mini Storage in the Charlotte area, it is all a dream come true.

“College has always been a priority for me and my mom, but unfortunately growing up it was hard to save,” said Shannon. “As it got closer and closer it was apparent that I wasn't going to get much help from federal student aid, so I had to find some way to pay for what I had been looking forward to for years. My mom heard about the SSA scholarship at work and I filled it out. Both of us were beyond words when I was awarded a Foundation Scholarship last year, because together we had accomplished a completely paid-for year of college.”

In essence, the SSA Foundation Scholarship has changed Shannon Young's life so much for the better.

“The SSA scholarship has made such a difference,” she said. “Without it, college just wouldn't have been possible. My mom has told me all my life that education is the one thing that someone can never take away from you. This Foundation Scholarship award has helped me not only in gaining the education that I've dreamt of, but has also taken the worry off my mom's face each time the tuition bill arrived.”

Five years on and going strong, the SSA Foundation Scholarship is making a difference in many young students' lives. Students with ties to self storage benefit from a program created by the Self Storage Association to give back to the industry. When the SSA made the decision to fund scholarships for young students who had parents in the self storage business, as well as adults working in self storage and attending college, it did so with the idea of giving back to the industry.

Mike Scanlon, SSA president and CEO, is pleased that students like Shannon Young can see their dreams realized through the help of the Foundation Scholarship program.

“The SSA is able to profoundly help students who need the help and point them toward their future,” said Scanlon. “It takes hard work and dedication from the SSA Foundation board of governors. They've done a tremendous job with the scholarship program. There is no better way to give back to our great industry than by promoting the future of these students.”

This past July the fifth group of SSA Foundation Scholarship winners was announced, and the 11 recipients received \$25,000 worth of scholarship aid. The winners come from both coasts of the USA as well as America's heartland. Three winners come from California, while the others are from North Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Maine, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Oregon.

The deserving winners are Caitlin Phillips (\$5,000 Barry Hoeven Scholarship) of Gardiner, Maine; Kathy Kerr (\$5,000 Craig and Edmond Olson Scholarship) of Happy Valley, Oregon; Shannon Young (\$2,500) of Concord, North Carolina; Jarrod Ariola (\$2,500) of Atlanta, Georgia; Ashley Purser (\$2,500) of Roseville, California; Brandon Wallick (\$2,500) of Bristol, Pennsylvania; Jan Mess (\$1,250) of Santa Maria, California; Rebecca McGuire (\$1,250) of Fairview Park, Ohio; Sierra Regan (\$1,250) of Moraga, California; Alexandra Zaleski (\$1,250) of Chicago, Illinois and Samantha Cole (\$1,250) of Riverview, Michigan.

A Look at Each of the Winners

What follows is a brief look at each winner. They each come with their own inspirations and aspirations. They all have activities they enjoy away from the classroom and their one shared aspect is, of course, their connection to self storage.



Caitlin Phillips: Caitlin is setting up to be involved in the world of communication in hopes of one day becoming a videographer with a focus on television advertisement. To that end she will be a senior at Saint Joseph's College in Maine, where her major is communications (specializing in new media). Caitlin hails from Gardiner,

Maine, and her mother Donna has worked for Gardiner Self Storage for 15 years. Other than communications, her primary interests are photography, art, the beach and going camping.



Katie Kerr: Katie is a transfer student attending Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon, and will be a senior this fall. She is majoring in American sign language studies with a minor in special education and rehabilitation counseling. When she moved to Independence, Oregon, for school, she began to work for Affordable Storage.

Katie is originally from Happy Valley, Oregon. Her goal is to work with deaf and hard of hearing individuals who have disabilities, and possibly become a counselor for parents who have just had a deaf baby. Her favorite hobbies include hunting, hiking, swimming, cooking and baking, target practicing, and spending quality time with her sweetheart, family and friends.



Shannon Young: Shannon will return to The University of North Carolina at Charlotte as a sophomore and will continue working on her degree in business economics. She lives at home in Concord, North Carolina, while attending school, and once done hopes to either have a good job offer or continue on to gain a graduate

degree in law. Her mother, Sharon Young, has worked for Morningstar Mini Storage for eight years and Shannon recently began to work with Morningstar this past May. When she's not at school or working, she likes to swim, shop and sing. She sings in the choir at UNCC and it is something that she can see herself doing for the rest of her life.



Jarrod Ariola: Jarrod is attending Southern Polytechnic State University this year and will be dual-majoring in computer science as well as computer game design and development. He hails from Atlanta, Georgia, and his mother is the property manager for Atlanta Midtown Storage Facility, a Morningstar property. When he

finishes school, Jarrod would like to program and design PC games. His favorite hobby is drumming and he plays drums for groups like jazz band and pit orchestra and does covers of songs. He also likes to help teach people how to play drums and will be a co-instructor for the Dunwoody High School Drumline.



Ashley Purser: Hailing from Roseville, California, Ashley is a junior at the University of California at Sacramento. She is a psychology major who has the goal of working with autistic children once she graduates. She works for CubeSmart and has a number of friends who work in self storage. Her favorite hobbies are

reading, going to the beach or mountains, and just hanging out and relaxing.



Jan Mees: Jan is a freshman at the University of Utah this fall and is already zeroing in on being a chemical engineering major with a focus on energy. He hopes to eventually get a masters degree. His father works with Mini-U-Storage in Lompoc, California, and at Canyon Self Storage in Santa Maria, California, where Jan

grew up. His dad is a member of the SSA and is a Certified Self Storage Manager. When he is finished with school, Jan hopes to work in an energy- or resource-related field such as petroleum or mining. Then he hopes to buy some land and live in the country. Jan enjoys computers and recently built his own computer from parts. Lately he has been backpacking in the wilderness with friends and camping for a few days at a time.



Rebecca McGuire: Thanks to her mother being involved with CubeSmart, Becca was able to come away with a Foundation Scholarship award that will help her pursue early childhood education at Cleveland State University. The senior hopes to become a teacher, then get her masters in childhood counseling.

When she has free time Becca enjoys running and going on vacations.



Sierra Regan: Sierra is attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo this fall as a freshman. Her major will be in industrial engineering. Her grandmother is the human resource director for Devon Self Storage in Emeryville, California, and Sierra lives in Moraga with two brothers, a younger sister and her parents. After college, Sierra

hopes to be hired by a progressive up-and-coming firm. She looks forward to becoming involved in streamlining practices and looking for more efficient and environmentally friendly methods. Sierra loves playing sports, having played three years of varsity basketball in high school. She enjoys staying active and being outdoors, especially at the beach.



Alexandra Zaleski: This fall finds Alexandra in her sophomore year at DePaul University, in Chicago, Illinois. She is studying at The Driehaus College of Business where she intends to major in business management with a concentration in human resources, plus she is working on a minor in standard geography. Her

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mother has worked for Extra Space Storage in Chicago for 13 years. Alexandra was born and raised in Chicago. Once finished at DePaul, she would like to attend graduate school at either the Northwestern Kellogg School of Management or The University of Chicago Booth School of Business. She enjoys reading, going to the Chicago beaches, tanning outside or exploring the city. In the winter she likes to go skiing or ice skating.



Samantha Cole: Samantha attends Northern Michigan University and majors in office information. She is connected to self storage by her mother, who works with National Storage in Southfield, Michigan. Samantha is originally from Detroit, Michigan. She hopes to be able to use her skills in hospital administration

once she is done with school. Samantha enjoys theatre and participates in many performances at Northern Michigan University. She also hopes to learn dance and sign language in the future.



Brandon Wallick: Starting his first year at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania, Brandon is hoping to concentrate his efforts in the realm of exercise science. His goal is to someday open a CrossFit gym and become a personal trainer. As you might imagine, among his favorite hobbies is CrossFit, but he also enjoys

basketball and hanging out with his friends. His connection to self storage is his mother, who works for Store Safe Self Storage in Bristol, Pennsylvania, part of the Ventura Investment Company.

Congratulations to the 2014 SSA Foundation Scholarship winners. Hopefully, they will all have bright futures and think fondly of the support they have received from the self storage industry in general, and SSA in particular. ❖



Help Us Help Them!

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