

For Immediate Release

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The Conservation Foundation Announces Scholarship Winners

Three Illinois Students Presented with Environmental Scholarships at Earth Day Benefit Dinner

NAPERVILLE, ILL. (April 25, 2008) – Environmental scholarships totaling \$7,000 were awarded to three Illinois students at The Conservation Foundation’s annual Earth Day Benefit Dinner held Thursday, April 24. A record-breaking crowd of nearly 500 attended the dinner at Bobak’s Signature Events, Woodridge, Ill., and raised an estimated \$140,000 toward conservation initiatives in Northeastern Illinois through dinner ticket sales and a silent auction.

Fall 2008 college freshmen Lisa Brashear, 24, of Wheaton, Ill., and Cassandra Wesseln, 17, of Villa Park, Ill., each received a \$2,500 Paul D. Pierotti Memorial Scholarship. Brashear will begin her studies in conservation biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison this fall, and Wesseln plans to study biology with an environmental emphasis at a Midwestern university.

The annual memorial scholarship for incoming college freshmen who plan to study conservation was created by Dewey Pierotti, president of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, and his wife, Leslie, in the name of their late son, Paul, an avid outdoorsman. Administered in a partnership between The Conservation Foundation, the DuPage Community Foundation and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, the Paul D. Pierotti Memorial Scholarship program is in its second year.

“The DuPage Community Foundation helped the Pierotti family achieve their charitable goal of advancing scholarship in the name of their son,” said Brent Manning, executive director of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. “The key beneficiaries of this partnership are the scholarship winners themselves, as well as the environment.”

Edward Richards, 19, of Plano, was named the first recipient of The Conservation Foundation Environmental Scholarship. The \$2,000 award was presented through The Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley, which serves southern Kane and Will counties.

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Richards is a 2007 Plano High School graduate, class valedictorian and a member of the National Honor Society and the school's Ecology Club. He is currently a freshman environmental studies major at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington.

The Conservation Foundation's Environmental Scholarship will provide annual awards to students who plan to pursue careers in the natural resource management and other environmentally-related fields. Established by Ron Yenerich, an advisory council member of The Conservation Foundation, this program is in its first year.

"These newest stewards of the environment will set the stage for conservation initiatives in the future and help ensure a healthy community in Northeastern Illinois," said Brook McDonald, president and CEO of The Conservation Foundation.

Applications for 2009 environmental scholarships will be available through The Conservation Foundation in January 2009.

For additional information about The Conservation Foundation, including its programs and services, visit www.theconservationfoundation.org or call 630-428-4500.

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The Conservation Foundation is a nonprofit land and watershed protection organization. Established in 1972 by business and community leaders, the Foundation is dedicated to preserving open space and natural lands, protecting rivers and watersheds, and promoting stewardship of the environment in northeast Illinois. Working closely with citizens, elected officials, developers, land use planners, park district and forest preserves, the Foundation has contributed to the protection of more than 30,000 acres of open space lands in northeast Illinois. The Conservation Foundation has more than 4,500 donors and members, and is headquartered at the 60-acre McDonald Farm in Naperville, Ill. A program office is located at the historic Dickson-Murst Farm in Montgomery, Ill.

Editors, please note: High-resolution images to illustrate following captions are available. To request, contact csivak@greenmarkpr.com.