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MHCA Scholarship Foundation

# Press Release

## MHCA Scholarship Foundation Announces 2009 Donald E. Pizzini Memorial Nurse Scholarship Awards

### Scholarship Recipients are from Across Montana

**Helena, July 15, 2009:** The MHCA Scholarship Foundation is pleased to announce its 2009 scholarship awards for the Donald E. Pizzini Memorial Nurse Scholarship Program. Named for a long-time friend and active participant in the Montana long term care industry, the Donald E. Pizzini Memorial Nurse Scholarship Program provides awards up to \$1,000 to Montana students who are enrolled in college nursing programs.

The Montana Health Care Association (MHCA), which represents nursing homes and assisted living centers throughout the state, created a foundation to offer nurse scholarships to Montana students in an attempt to be an active part of the solution to Montana's nursing shortage. Individuals with an interest in long-term care who pursue a nursing degree are invited to apply for the scholarships. The program attracted 13 applications statewide for the 2009 round of scholarships. The following students were selected for this year's scholarship awards:

**Ashley Downs from Havre.** Ashley is working toward her Associate Degree in nursing at Montana State University-Northern. Her field of interest is geriatric nursing. She has been employed by Northern Montana Care Center as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) since July 2006. Prior to that, she worked as a CNA at Roundup Memorial Hospital. Ashley says her experiences as a CNA have provided the motivation to become a nurse, and she looks forward to continuing her work in long term care after she graduates from college. Ashley was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

**Rachel Pottenger from Fort Benton.** Rachel became a CNA and began working at Missouri River Medical Center before graduating from high school. Working as a CNA showed Rachel that nursing is the career for her. She is currently enrolled at Carroll College in Helena studying for her Bachelor's Degree in nursing. Rachel states "caregivers should give the care they would want to have" and she strives to provide the highest quality of care to the residents she works with now and those she hopes to work with in the future. Rachel was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

**Debra Rasmussen from Chinook.** Debra has dreamed of a career in nursing all her adult life. While raising eight children as a ranch wife, pastor's wife and store owner, Debbie became a CNA and worked in home health and at Northern Montana Care Center in Havre. Her supervisors at the Care Center state "Her work ethic is exceptionally high and her extraordinary compassion for our residents is very evident in the care she provides." She is currently working toward her RN degree at Montana State University-Northern. She enjoys geriatrics and is looking forward to working in long term care. Debra was awarded a \$750 scholarship.

**Sarah Ann Rieder from Boulder. Sarah studied to be a CNA at the University of Montana-Helena and is currently working toward a Licensed Practical Nurse degree with a final goal of obtaining an RN. She is employed as a CNA at Elkhorn Health and Rehab in Clancy. Sarah says “I am passionate about the health care system, and I want to make a difference.” Her supervisor at Elkhorn Health & Rehab states “Ms. Rieder appears to me to be successful at anything she desires to accomplish, and I feel blessed that she has focused her desire [on] health care and particularly the care of the elderly and disabled.” Sarah was awarded a \$750 scholarship.**

**Macee Shaw from Fort Benton. Macee graduated from Fort Benton High School in May and will begin her studies in pre-nursing at Montana State University-Billings this fall. Macee is a Certified Nursing Assistant and worked at Missouri River Medical Center while finishing high school at the top of her class. Macee says “after participating in the CNA course and working at the assisted living last summer, I formed some great bonds with the residents. I feel it is very important to take care of the generation that has given so much opportunity to me.” Macee was awarded a \$250 scholarship.**

**Julia Tikka from Kalispell. Julia has worked as a home health aide for the Kalispell Regional Medical Center while completing her pre-nursing studies at Flathead Valley Community College. Julia’s experiences as a home health aide have provided the incentive for her to work toward a career in nursing. She says “I love helping patients and have grown to especially love the elderly individuals. I like to think that I can continue working with and helping elderly folks like these for the rest of my life.” She has received an upper division placement in the nursing program at Montana State University College of Nursing in Bozeman and will be working toward a bachelor’s degree in nursing. She plans to return to the Flathead Valley after graduation. Julia was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.**

**The Donald E. Pizzini Memorial Nurse Scholarship is the first of its kind in Montana, sponsored by the long term care industry exclusively for nurses. It is designed to facilitate the development of an educated health care workforce. While MHCA provided the initial funding for the foundation, the foundation continues to invite and receive ongoing contributions from industry leaders and others in Montana who share its vision. For information about how to apply for a scholarship or donate to the Foundation, go to [www.mthealthcare.org](http://www.mthealthcare.org).**