



Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation Newsletter

A Dollars for Scholars Organization, Mount Baker School District

Heidi Roland Future "Singing Vet Technician" (Class of 1999)

Written by Susan Lenssen



One of my favorite memories as a parent of a student at Mt. Baker was attending the Mt. Baker musi-

cals, and listening to Heidi Roland sing in Brigadoon, Lil' Abner, and other musicals. I was transported by her voice and her enthusiasm.

Heidi wrote a letter to the Scholarship Foundation in 2000, a year after her graduation, expressing her appreciation for her scholarship. She wrote: "I am going into my second term at Western Washington University and have enjoyed being here immensely, and have a 3.6 G.P.A."

Remembering that beautiful voice and engaging smile, I tracked down Heidi. She told me that she had studied in the music department at Western for four years. She gave her junior voice recital after taking voice lessons, and did many performances, including operas.

Heidi took a year off after her junior year, and realized that though music is her passion, she wanted to do something else to earn a living. Heidi had always loved animals, so her decision to attend a two-year technician program at Bellingham Technical College was a natural choice for her. She attends classes at night, and during the day is a personal assistant for a blind couple. As of June 2010, Heidi will be a licensed veterinary technician.

Heidi feels that she made a good choice to work with animals. At home, cats just seem to show up; one cat that appeared from nowhere had a litter of eight kittens. There are five cats at home now for Heidi to enjoy, along with pet sitting occasionally. Heidi would like to work in a veterinary hospital or clinic.

Heidi's favorite classes at Mt. Baker were band and choir. She cherishes the friendships she made in choir and in the Mountaineer Band. She also enjoyed English with Mr. Gorski. She loved the books she read and discussed in class.

Heidi says she is finding out who she is now. She listens to music and sings with friends, and she sings at weddings and funerals. She may go back to music as a career one day, but for now she is content working with ani-

MBSF is a volunteer group of community members committed to encouraging academic achievement by providing scholarships for students in the Mt. Baker School District.

Wesley Norstadt “Pays It Forward”

mals. Heidi says, “I decided to follow what I really want to do.” Her friends say that she will be a “singing veterinary technician.”

Heidi is the daughter of Steve and Susan Roland of Bellingham.



Wesley Norstadt “Teaches for America”



Wesley Norstadt was busy earning his Bachelor of Business Administration Degree at Gonzaga University; he didn't know then that right after graduation in 2008 he would be spending countless hours working with mostly Hispanic low-income fifth graders in Southern Texas, just 10 minutes from the Mexican border. A series of reflections and a decision to give back to kids in need led Wes to join the Teach for America program and commit two years to help bridge educational inequities in our country.

During his first two years at Gonzaga, Wes' membership in various philanthropic business clubs

sparked his desire for community service. He also volunteered as a SMILE mentor (self-esteem mentoring increasing life's expectancy)- similar to Big Brothers/Sisters.

Wes' paid jobs also revolved around community service. He was a tutor for athletes who missed classes and study time in finance and philosophy due to sports involvement. He was also manager of the retreat center.

Although Wes took the LSAT for law school in his senior year, he had a strong feeling that first he wanted to help kids who need extra attention from qualified and dedicated teachers. He discovered Teach For America through some friends, and with all of his past experiences helping young students, he felt that this was where he could make a positive impact on students' lives.

The Teach for America Program is a two-year commitment. It began in Houston with a six-week intensive summer teaching institute. Then Wes moved to Brownsville, and is currently teaching fifth grade reading and math in Harlingen, Texas. Along with teaching, he attends curriculum and content seminars, and after one year he will receive his teacher's certificate. He's also working on his Spanish in his spare time!

Wes realizes that the kids he works with are not less smart than their more advantaged peers, but they need structure and lots of love and attention. “I truly believe in malleable intelligence, that all people can learn and no one is incapable of

achieving intellectual success. Some of us are more naturally gifted in certain areas, but socio-economics should not be the inhibiting and dividing factor that it currently is.”

His Thomas and Martina Horn Foundation Scholarship, along with other scholarships, made it possible for Wes to attend Gonzaga, a private university with 5,000 students. He says that the Mt. Baker Scholarship Committee is doing an amazing job helping students get to where they want to be and to pursue their dreams. He encourages all seniors to apply.

Numerous leadership involvements at Mt. Baker have shaped Wes' present success. He was a football captain, baseball captain, and wrestling team member. He was the Vice President of FBLA, Vice President of the Honor's Club, and a member of the Letterman's Club. He was an umpire for Little League Baseball and a volunteer first responder for fire district 16 Acme/Van Zandt.

He thanks the Mt. Baker English Department for giving him a strong background in writing and language arts. He feels that he came to the university with better reading comprehension and writing abilities than his peers from other high schools.

Wes' words of advice to seniors: “It is often not the most talented, but the most dedicated that succeed and really flourish; the students who have determination and drive. Take the hardest classes offered in high school to prepare yourself.”

Board Member Helps Dreams Come True

As for the future, Wes will consider law school at the end of his two-year teaching commitment. He enjoyed finance, and can see himself in that capacity sometime.

Wes' goal for now is to change the lives of the students he is working with as much as they are changing his life.

Wesley is the son of Andy and Donna Norstadt of Acme.



Meet Board Member Theresa Sygitowicz

The Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation is an all volunteer organization dedicated to supporting the academic excellence of students in the Mt. Baker School District. Some of these members have volunteered their time since the foundation's inception nearly 15 years ago. One long time volunteer is Theresa Sygitowicz who has additional ties to the Foundation through the scholarship her family established in memory of her older sister, Dr. Christine Sygitowicz Sherman. The Christine Sygitowicz Sherman Scholarship was founded in Christine's memory thirty years ago. Dr. Christine Sygitowicz Sherman was a nationally recognized nuclear physicist. She died of a cerebral hemorrhage at age 39. The Lawrence Livermore Laboratories where she worked began funding the

scholarship and community members, family and friends have been donating ever since.

Theresa is a third generation Whatcom County resident. Her mother, Peggy Scutvick, was born in Lawrence and her father Leo was born on Theresa's granddad's homestead on Clipper Road. Theresa remembers how her teacher at Acme School, Mrs. Jacoby, kept all twenty-seven first grade students in line. If a child were to misbehave in school, Mrs. Jacoby would call the folks!

Theresa now farms in Clipper on the homestead and cares for her parents, enabling them to stay in the family home that they love so much. Leo is 97 and Peggy is 94. Theresa has a supportive local community that helps her to achieve this. She has to be organized to make time for caring for her parents, doing yard work and gardening, working at St. Joseph's as a ward clerk (she has an accounting background) and participating in the Scholarship Foundation.

Theresa's community-service oriented family has always been involved in volunteering. Theresa has had a focus of "children at risk"; she has been a past board member of Catholic charities, Seattle Archdiocesan Catholic Charity, Northwest Catholic Charity and many other community boards. She is an active member of St. Peter's Catholic Church. Theresa has been a volunteer EMT fireman with WCFD #16- Acme until recently.

Theresa saw what a difference scholarships could make in students' lives. They open doors that students never considered opening. She has enjoyed witnessing this change in the recipients during her years of working as a volunteer. Theresa relates this incident after a scholarship awards night that brought this feeling to life for her:

"A student was sobbing, and I put my arm around her as the girl said, 'You don't know what this means to me to get this scholarship.' Her parents explained to me that because they did not want their daughter to feel less worthy if she didn't reach her dream, they didn't encourage her to dream. By her winning the scholarship, she had a chance to fulfill her dream."

This interchange reenergized Theresa's commitment to the Scholarship Foundation and her goal to help all children with dreams, especially those whose circumstances are disadvantaged.



We're always looking for stories from MBSF scholarship recipients. No matter how long ago you graduated from Mt. Baker High School, nor what path you've travelled, we're interested in what you're doing now and how you got there! Email Sue Lenssen at slpingdragon@nas.com so we can contact you or anyone you know who's willing to share their stories in this newsletter!



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Donation and Interest Form for Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ **E-mail** _____

Yes, I am interested in helping Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation raise scholarship funds for Mt. Baker students.

I am enclosing a tax-deductible donation for Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation:

\$10 \$20 \$50 \$100 (donor entitled to commemorative tile on Wall of Honor)

Other _____

Can we use your name in promotion efforts for the Foundation? Yes No Check with me first

I am interested in discussing setting up a Named or Endowed scholarship through Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation. Please contact me. A convenient time to reach me at home is _____.

Please contact me with more information about attending monthly meetings of the Foundation.

Please complete and mail this form to: Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation, P.O. Box 875, Deming, WA 98244.



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