Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation Newsletter
Mount Baker School District, Washington State

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

Graduate Shanon Fischer Makes Giving Back to the Community a Family Affair

Shanon Fischer, 2002 Mt. Baker High School graduate, joined her mother, Joan Hammer (secretary) and aunt, Mary Compton (president) on the Foundation Board several years ago. She joined the Foundation Board because she knew she would settle here. She and her husband are building a house on the Sand Road and she wants to give back to her community. She says, “I want to help students move on to the next chapter in their lives by supporting them as they pursue their dreams. I think I offer a unique perspective on the board since I am closer in age to the graduates than the rest of the board members. I remember what it was like to be in their shoes and to feel the stress of having to make so many life decisions.”

Newsletter co-chair, Sue Lenssen, met with Shanon a few months ago at the Lynden Middle School, where Shanon works as an English Language Learners (ELL) para educator. Shanon’s talents in Spanish and teaching have led her to where she is now and she is always looking for new ways to use her passion for the language and for education.

Shanon in front of her new home on Sand Road
Shanon Fischer makes volunteering a family affair

After high school, Shanon attended the University of Puget Sound for two years. She transferred to Western Washington University and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Spanish and a minor in Latin American Studies. She did undergraduate studies in Guadalajara and found the first two weeks hard to adjust to. By the end of her stay, she wondered why she was leaving! She says that her Spanish increased dramatically and recommends immersion as the key to fluency in a language. She has a special place in her heart for Guadalajara, and until recently she returned there every two years.

Shanon worked at a bank right after college. She became the assistant manager, and could have moved to a new bank, but she realized that she needed to pursue her true vocation as a teacher. She worked for four years in Mt. Vernon as an English Language Learners para educator and there she met her husband, a teacher at Mt. Baker Middle School, in Mt. Vernon.

During this time Shanon went back to school and earned her teaching certificate in Language Arts. She then taught high school English in Mt. Vernon for one year. She missed ELL, however, and wanted to be closer to home. This is her first year teaching ELL in Lynden as a para educator. She loves ELL, but would need to earn an endorsement in order to be certified. If she does become a Language Arts teacher in Whatcom County, she will use her language skills in Spanish with the many Hispanic students.

When Shanon studied in Venezuela during high school, she was shocked into reality at how little Spanish she really knew. “I realized how naïve I had been to think that two years of high school Spanish would prepare me to move to a Spanish speaking country!” she remarked. “At the same time, I began to understand that if you strip away the different language and cultural traditions, people are just people. It was an experience that definitely propelled me into living a life of travel. I have since traveled the globe interacting with people in huge cities like Rome all the way to tiny villages in remote Africa, and it doesn’t scare me at all because I know that it takes all kinds of people to make up this world, and chances are I can meet some amazing individuals if I open my mind and my heart.”

Shanon reflects that the teachers at Mt. Baker School District were such good role models that it made her want to be a teacher. She loved her Spanish classes, and her studies in Venezuela. “I know what it’s like to learn another language,” she said. “I feel I can build an appropriate environment in my ELL classes to ease the anxiety of learning another language.”

Shanon is the daughter of Joan and the late Michael Hammer of Bellingham.

Keeley Savatgy Successfully Combines Travel & Education

Keeley Savatgy, a 2007 Mt. Baker High School graduate and recipient of a Mandy Stavik Scholarship, has been an ELL facilitator at the library for the last two years, beginning while she was still studying at Fairhaven College at Western Washington University. She graduated from Fairhaven last spring with a major in Latino Communities: Culture and Advocacy.

Enter the North Fork Library on a Thursday evening and you will see a cozy group of Hispanic English Language Learners, notebooks in hand, gathered around a table and giving their full attention to Keeley Savatgy as she writes English phrases on the whiteboard, pronouncing the words clearly. English conversation is laced with rapid-fire Spanish and much laughter from the students, and from Keeley, who is fluent in Spanish.

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After Keeley’s first year of college, she took a year off and traveled to Ecuador. Her Spanish fluency developed on this trip, along with her love of the culture and people. She returned to Western in 2009 with a strong sense of direction and a renewed motivation for her studies.

As part of her coursework at Fairhaven College, Keeley assisted an immigration attorney doing clinics for undocumented youth. Although she had been aware since high school of the differences between their opportunities and her own, she became more familiar with the obstacles they face. This imbalance fueled a desire to help provide education and work opportunities for immigrants.

Keeley’s undergraduate program culminated with a final quarter in Guatemala, in the hometown of many immigrants in this area. The people in this rural, indigenous Mayan culture are forced to migrate, due to the poverty in the town. Keeley continued her Spanish language studies with classes and immersion in the language.

Keeley enjoyed learning Spanish at Mt. Baker High School with Mr. Johnson, who was the first person to plant the idea in her head that she could travel as part of her education. Dancing in high school and playing the alto saxophone in the jazz band led to her current love of dancing and music. She performs Cuban salsa dancing every Saturday with Rumba Northwest.

When I met with Keeley, she said that now was a transition time, and she was looking for meaningful work in her human services field. I received this message from her:

“...I just landed my first “real” job - and it’s in my line of study!! I will be the Small Groups Coordinator at the Whatcom Literacy Council. That means I coordinate the adult basic education classes offered around the county: GED preparation classes, citizenship test prep classes, and English as a second language classes as well such as “Talk Time”. I will be using my knowledge of the cultural diversity in our community to determine what is most needed in adult basic education, and then coordinate the public classes. I’m so excited!”

Keeley is the daughter of Pat Savatgy of Bellingham and Karen Edland of Deming.

An Overdue Note of Gratitude

Although we have passed the traditional season of “thanksgiving”, we want to express our gratitude to all the donors who opened their wallets to help Mt. Baker School District students pursue their post high school education dreams. The Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation is committed to helping students in their pursuit of higher education whether they plan to test the waters at community colleges, plunge directly into four year institutions or gain skills in the trades/technical arenas at vocational colleges. Your donations help make the Foundation what it is. In these times of economic challenges we especially appreciate your generosity. Thank you.

The following people donated to the Foundation from October 30, 2011 to November 16, 2013. We apologize in advance for any misspellings or inadvertent omissions.

**Fundraisers and Donations:**
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In Memory of Courtney Cadle:
Jeanna & Norman Cadle
Herman Chiropractic Ctr., Inc.
Kristina Longoria
Jonathan Rands, Attorney at Law

In Memory of Karen Dodson:
Georgiann Gorman
2013 Annual Mt. Baker Cross Country Invitational Fundraiser

Rob Baisden reports that the Foundation’s annual t-shirt/sweatshirt fundraiser at the Mt. Baker Silver Lake Cross Country Invitational in fall raised over $2,000. Mt. Baker High School senior Meryl Evans created the design. Our successful sales show the popularity of her design.

There was a total of 14 sponsors including Siper Quarry and River’s Edge U-Cut Christmas Trees who also sponsored last year. Special thanks to those two local companies. We added 12 new sponsors:

- ARM, Aggressive Repair & Maintenance
- Canyon Hydro
- Cascade Machine Works, Inc.
- Everson Farm Equipment
- Hardware Sales
- Johnson’s Towing
- Maple Fuels
- Mt. Baker Mechanical
- River’s Edge U-Cut Christmas Trees
- Siper Quarry
- 3C’s Timer Butting
- Welcome Construction
- Xtreme Bean Espresso

When the opportunity arises, please patronize these community minded businesses.

And for your screen printing needs, we recommend Amjay Screen Printing in Bellingham. We’ve purchased the shirts and had them printed at this company for years.

Thanks to board secretary, Joan Hammer, who coordinated the t-shirt sales for several years before Rob took over last year. Joan helped develop the t-shirt sales into a successful fundraiser.

Profits from the t-shirt sales now fund a scholarship in memory of Rob’s daughter, Sarah Baisden (class of 2004). If you’d like to contribute, please fill out the form on the back page of this newsletter and specify that it’s for the Sarah Baisden Memorial Scholarship.

Nicholas Bean
(Class of 2013)
Attends His “Dream School”

And, finally, here’s a letter we recently received from one of our class of 2013 graduates. Nicholas Bean is attending Colorado School of Mines.

Dear Mount Baker Scholarship Foundation,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to pursue an education at such a magnificent school by providing me with the resources to ensure that I can afford it. I greatly appreciate everything you have done for me, and everything that you will do for future students who decide to pursue a post high school education. It's something that not enough people value these days, but something that is becoming increasingly important. Your contributions allow students with no other means to attend the college of their dreams. Thank you.

Nicholas Bean
Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation
P.O. Box 875
Deming, WA 98244

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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
☐ 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.

Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation Board Members Include:

Mary Compton, President; Cathy Harris, Vice President; Kim Raper, Treasurer; Neal Bittner, Fundraising Chair; Mary Zender, Alumni Chair; Joan Hammer, Secretary; Gail Kuromiya/Sue Lenssen, Newsletter Co-Chairs.