

WOEC Names Scholarship Winners

West Oregon Electric Cooperative (WOEC) is proud to be able to invest in the future of a few of the outstanding students in their service territory. This year WOEC was able to give two \$1,000 Sam Hearing Scholarships. The scholarship committee that is made up of WOEC members reviewed the applications and considered not only the GPA and test scores of the applicants, but also the amount of community service the students had done, and their goals and motivation to succeed in life.

The West Oregon Electric Cooperative Sam Hearing Scholarships are given in the memory of Sam Hearing. Sam served on the WOEC board of directors for 35 years, and his commitment to the co-op and community are symbolized in the continuing effort of WOEC to help further the education of their youth. Sam and his wife, Alvilda, shared a strong commitment to education – Alvilda as a school teacher in Vernonia, and Sam serving as a member of the Vernonia School Board and Columbia County Education Service District. This commitment led the WOEC Board of Directors to establish the Sam Hearing Scholarship fund in August of 2003 when Sam retired from the WOEC Board. Sam passed away on January 15, 2004 and so the scholarships will remain to remind us of his dedication to the Cooperative and the community that he lived in and served.

The following students were chosen to receive \$1,000 Sam Hearing scholarships: Autumn Sorenson and Payton Wolf from Vernonia High School.

Chance to Become Scholarship Breaks the Million Dollar Mark

The Chance to Become Scholarship Program has surpassed the one-million dollar mark in Columbia County. Since the year 2000, the Columbia Learning Center (CLC) has offered this \$5,000 scholarship to 210 students at all Columbia County High Schools, for a total of \$1,050,000 in scholarship awards. This year, thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Columbia Learning Center, 12 students in Columbia County will be given their own Chance to Become as they graduate from local high schools.

The funding for the scholarships comes from anonymous donors and from the Black Tie & Blue Jean Summer Social and Auction, which is held once every two years. This year's Black Tie will be held on August 5 at the Deer Island Stock Ranch. For ticket reservations or for sponsorship information, email btbsocial@gmail.com.

CLC Board Member Marion Christensen explained that the Chance to Become scholarship is one of the most unique scholarships in the nation, and is designed to include a wide range of students from across a graduating class. Recipients don't apply. Instead, they are chosen based on very non-traditional criteria, with grades playing a minor role in the process. A student might be selected because they possess a special skill or a unique talent. They might be someone who has overcome a behavioral or personal challenge. They may be a student whose family cannot pay for continuing education. Or they

may simply be a student who tries their best at whatever they do.

"As donors, we believe that we were given "A Chance to Become" in our lives, and we want to return that good fortune by giving a young person a jump-start in their life," Christensen said. "Our scholarship recipients are asked to make this same commitment. When they accept this scholarship, they agree to help another student in the future by giving them their own Chance to Become. This giving back promotes lifelong learning and strengthens our community."

In 2017, CLC will award five scholarships to students from the St. Helens School District, two scholarships to students from Scappoose, three scholarships to students from Clatskanie, and one scholarship each to students from Rainier and Vernonia. Jessica Williams was this year's recipient of the scholarship at the Vernonia High School Commencement ceremony on June 3.

The number of scholarships in each community varies because some communities have individuals and organizations that directly fund scholarships for students graduating from their school districts.

"These are quite possibly the most important scholarships we have available for our students," St. Helens High School Principal B.G. Aguirre said. "They are very generous and are life-changing for many of our students. The fact that someone believes in them and is giving them a chance to succeed is irreplaceable."

Vernonia Summer Meal Program



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Vernonia School Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. The next School Board Meeting is scheduled for July 13 at 6:00 pm in the Schools Library.

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