



Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation Newsletter

A Dollars for Scholars Organization, Mount Baker School District

Jessi Stipes Class of 2007



Photo provided by Jessi Stipes

In 2007 you graduated from Mount Baker High School with the Louise B. Peterson Scholarship to Woodring College at Western Washington University. Can you tell us about your undergraduate classes and experiences? What were your goals?

I graduated with the largest scholarship that Mount Baker had to offer. I can't thank the Scholarship Foundation enough for the opportunities it has granted me. All of the experiences that I've come across wouldn't be possible without their help.

When I began my time at Western, I decided to participate in Crew. Crew forced me out of bed at 4 am every morning to work out in freezing temperatures only to go to an 8 am class after returning to school from the lake. (We also had to do 2-hour afternoon or evening workouts.) I was working, going to class, doing crew; I was in an education club, having a social life, etc. I had to start prioritizing my life based around school and why

Interview by Sue Lenssen

A remarkable young woman named Jessi Stipes has made us proud by graduating from Western Washington University under the first four year scholarship provided by the Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation. The Louise E. Peterson Memorial Scholarship was founded by Cathy Harris in honor of her mother, Louise E. Peterson. Cathy is not only an active MBSF board member but also former principal of Mt. Baker Junior High. MBSF provided funds for the first two years; WWU Woodring College of Education kicked in the last two years. Sue Lenssen caught up with Jessi recently and learned how this scholarship literally changed her life.

**"Our Students,
Their Future,
Your Support"**

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

Jessi Stipes, Recipient of the Louise E. Peterson Scholarship

I was there. I was there because the Foundation decided I deserved to be there and I didn't want to disappoint them. My goals changed from trying to be overly involved in everything to trying to boost my GPA.

I finished my GURs freshman year so by sophomore year I was able to move to more interesting classes that suited my English Literature Degree requirements. I finished my sophomore year with good grades. I was the secretary of an education club called "Diversity Inspired Volunteer Educators". I had been living in a house that year with some wonderful girls that I had met in the dorms who are still my good friends today.

Junior year I received my acceptance letter for the teaching program. I knew I was going to be an English teacher one day and I was finally in Woodring and ready to work towards that. I decided to go for finishing my English degree and my teaching certificate at the same time. I was working part-time to pay for my housing, bills, and food and I was struggling to make sure that I maintained my time management skills that I had perfected from freshman year. I picked up an English tutoring job for a student who attended Mount Baker and I met with him twice a week to work on English skills. This was a turning point for me because I realized how much I loved teaching and helping people with English.

By senior year I wanted to get out there and teach something instead of making mock lesson plans and mock unit plans that I would probably never use but spent hours creating from scratch. As I look back on this, it makes me happy that I spent lots of time creating those resources and

everything from scratch because now that I'm in my internship these things come much more naturally for me. I graduated with my English Literature degree that spring and had all of my plans set up to do my student teaching in Ecuador at the British School of Quito (BSQ) in Ecuador and I was ecstatic.

How did you prepare for living and teaching in Ecuador?

My aunt bought me some Spanish language software, my boyfriend bought me a few very informative guidebooks, and I returned to googling every once in a while. As for preparing for the actual school aspect of it, I was unable to do much preparation. I didn't know I was going to even be at BSQ until around June. After I received that information I didn't know where I was going to live, what level I was going to teach, or what my cooperating teacher's name was. It took until late August to discover that I was going to be teaching three different age groups and that I had to teach them things that I had never read. It was scary!

How is life in Ecuador? What are your responsibilities?

Life in Ecuador is adventurous and capricious. At first I wore my money belt everywhere and was afraid to take pictures of anything for fear that someone would swipe my camera. What I have learned is that if you are cautious, don't travel alone, and take a lot of taxis, you are pretty safe. I live in an Urbanisacion in Cumbaya, where we have a gated community with a security guard, so I feel safe in my own home. Once you get comfortable and familiar with your surroundings, the more you can experi-

ence Ecuador with deep appreciation and acceptance.

My responsibilities at BSQ at this moment are teaching *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to my Year 9's, *Holes* to my Year 8's, and teaching "language and power" to my Year 12's which includes things like propaganda, manifestos, surrealism, etc. It's awesome. One thing that I find difficult, however, is that 90% of the students speak English as their second language. So imagine trying to teach them *Hitchhiker's Guide* which is in complex British style language with jokes even an American like me can't understand. I teach Year 8 and Year 9 by myself without any supervision because my cooperating teacher is completely confident in my abilities.

How long will you be there, and what are your plans when you return?

I arrived in late September and will be teaching until December 16th. My internship is supposed to be only ten weeks long, but I can't abandon my students a week before the term ends! I have been asked on multiple occasions if I can stay for the rest of the year and it is really hard to tell them that it just doesn't work that way! All of these students are amazing and I will miss them dearly when I do have to leave. Just yesterday I had a student tell me in Year 12 that she thoroughly enjoys my lessons and wants me to be her permanent English teacher!

What in your past led you to what you are doing now? What role did Mt. Baker High School and your scholarship play in your success?

When someone undergoes a hardship when they are in 8th or 9th grade,

Recognition of Recent Donors

two things can happen. First, you can react really poorly, rebel, fight, go to school with an “I don’t care if I get lunch detention again” type of attitude, and do numerous other negative things. Or you can just stop going to school and do all of the previously mentioned things except have the law staring you in the face instead of the principal. I decided to be person number one. This meant that I was not getting the best grades, I was a pain to have in class, and I hated being at home. However, one day I came to the realization that if I kept going that way I would end up living the rest of my life that way.

I was able to get adopted into a wonderful family (they had been friends of our family for years) where my positive growth was supported, and I decided I had rebelled enough. My grades improved, I made positive choices, and I was ASB Vice President my senior year at Mount Baker. I was happy, and I had turned my life around with a change in my personal outlook on life and the help of a great person, Daniel Lewing, who had adopted me into his family.

What advice do you have for high school graduates?

I think the most important thing to remember as a high school student is that sometimes there aren’t people that you can depend on. Sometimes, there aren’t places you can go when you need a break from your life. But in the end, we are in charge of our own happiness. When there is no one else there, you always have yourself. And if you really know yourself, you can be the one who picks yourself up. Once you do that, other people will respond to that, you will inspire other

people, and you will get what you deserve out of life because you worked for it *yourself*. For a while I couldn’t see the light at the end of my tunnel, so I had to be the one who made the change before others would help me make other changes. I think that is the most important life lesson that I have learned. Once you have others helping you, never let them go. But always remember you will always have yourself and you can be your own inspiration.

Jessi is the daughter of Daniel Lewing of Deming.



With Gratitude

In this season of thanksgiving and gratitude, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the MBSF flourishes thanks to your generous spirits and pocketbooks. With your donations our students can dream big dreams and as a community we all grow stronger in supporting our next generation.

The following generous souls sent donations from early November 2010 to the end of October 2011. Please forgive us for any inadvertent omissions or misspellings. We appreciate each and every one of you.

Fundraisers and Donations:

A.L.R.T. Corporation
Anderson, Michelle
Baisden, Robert & Wilna
Baisden, Tammy
Bellinger, Diane VanderYacht
Boncheff, Robert
Brunk, Dwight A.
Burleigh, Charles
Callahan, Kristine
Challender, Mark
Clark, Violet (Knoll)
Conrad-Graham, Paula
Culbert, Sally (Richner)
Culver, Shelley
Cunningham, Martha Lynn
Ebert, Jacqueline Lee
Fairhaven Runners
Finsrud, Susan K.
Gantman, Richard
Golden, Jeffrey & Leslie
Gosda, Gregory
Haglund, N.E, Marian (Miller)
Haglund
Hall, Trina
Hamilton, Kenneth C. & Barbara
Hanson, Thomas M.
Henry, Eric
Hollingsworth, Jacqueline
Hubbard, Sandra
IGA Dodson’s Market
Klix, Roland
Knutzen-Chin, Heather
Larsen, Kelli
Lee, Ivan A.
Leigh, Diane
Madison, Sandra
Marston, Toby
Menti, Melissa
Moore, Ann
Mt. Baker Alumni 51 plus Reunion
Mt. Baker Automotive

Recognition of Recent Donors

Mt. Baker Rotary Club
Pavesi, Susan
People's Bank
Purdy, Cynthia
Reding, Colleen Marie
River's Edge Tree Farm
Roames, DeAnn & Richard
Robinson, Gay
Rohde, MaryAnn
Ross, Sher Smith
Satushek, Laurie
Siper H & H Corporation
Smith, Eunice
Strachila, Lisa
Sutton, Charlene
Sutton, Douglas
Terhorst, Pamela & James
Thomas & Martina Horn Founda-
tion
VanBuskirk, Kim
Webb, Barbara
Weyant, Beaudene

In Memory of Sarah Baisden

Adkinson, Norma & Roland
Baisden, Robert & Wilna
Barnhart, George E.
Brunk, Dwight A. & Scott, Dale J.
Clark, Jean & Robert
Fleet Reserve Asso, Bellingham
Branch #245
The Hart Family: Tim, Trish,
Jordon, Emily & Conner
Helgesen, Wiona
Johnson, Terry & Linda
The Managan Family: Bill,
Margaret, Megan, Becky & Billy
Olson, Marianne & Richard
Olson, Mary & Ted
Phy, Victoria

In Memory of Erin Golden & Brent Golden

Golden, Leon & Verjean

In Memory of Chris Hodges

Rawlins, John & Mary

In Memory of Barbara Skinner

Gorman, Georgiann

In Memory of Robert Stithem

Stithem, Margaret

In Memory of Daniel Zender

Aarstol, Patrick & Patricia
Bellinger, Diane & Gary
Bittner, Neal
Hunter, Gerald & Janneth
Larson Gross PLLC
Nelson, Ann & Les
Pelan, Bill, Karin, Conner & Hannah
Provost, Dolores (Cook)
West Fork Timber Co., LLC
Williamson, Mary
Zender, Chet & Lisa



We Hear from Recipients

We love hearing from former recipients of MBSF scholarships. Their letters are full of gratitude, hope and excitement. Angela Murashov's letter is a fine example of why we board members do what we do.

Dear MBSF,

I am writing to thank you for your generous \$2,000 scholarship. I was very happy and appreciative to learn that I was selected as the recipient of your scholarship.

I am currently a junior at Whatcom Community College and I plan to graduate with a transfer degree in June 2012. After graduation I will attend Western WA University to earn my computer science degree. Thanks to you, I am one step closer to that goal.

By awarding me the Thorleif Mohn Scholarship, you have lightened my financial burden which allows me to focus more on the most important aspect of school - learning. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me.

Sincerely,

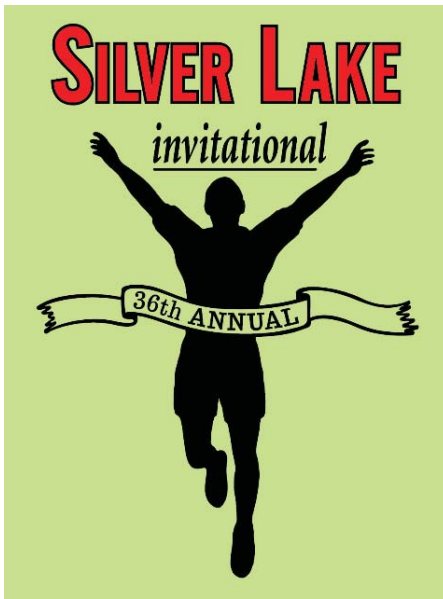
Angela Murashov

Class of 2011



Support from Students & Parents

Thank You Sarah Finger!



Sarah's Winning Design

We owe Sarah Finger, a junior at MBHS with a long time love of art, a big thank you for designing the art chosen for the 2011 Silver Lake Cross Country Invitational t-shirt. MBSF has sold t-shirts as a fundraiser for many years at this event, held every fall. Sarah's artwork was selected from several student submittals; the t-shirts were a hot seller at the meet.

Sarah is in Costa Rica this year as an AFS exchange student. She lives with a Costa Rican family, attends a public school, plays soccer on a girls team and is becoming fluent in Spanish.

Sarah asked that the small honorarium we offered her be donated back to the Foundation. So, here's

a double thank you, Sarah! You impress us with your generosity and make us proud (again) of the Mt. Baker School District students. What remarkable bunch of kids you are!

Sarah is the daughter of Mike and Kim Finger of Bellingham.



*Photo provided by June Thompson
June and Daughter, Megan*

Meet June Thompson Founding Board Member

June Thompson is one of the founding board members of the MBSF and still serves on the board today. The foundation was established in the early 90's, so do the math - over 17 years of dedicated service and over 150 board meetings (we don't meet during the summer)! June provides continuity and expertise to the board and we are forever grateful for her participation. We asked her why she serves. This is what she wrote:

I dropped out of college in the mid-70's with just one year left to complete my 4 year degree. The reasons for dropping out and leaving Ohio to move to Bellingham seemed like great ones at the time, but I have often wished I had stuck it out to complete that last year! A few years later I attended WWU for a few classes but was told it would take me about three (!) additional years to finish my degree. Married, with a small child and limited income, I gave up on that idea.

I have since been successful in my working life with many opportunities for travel and learning new skills. But college still stands out in my memory as a unique and wonderful time when all doors have the potential to be opened. I volunteer so that I can encourage and support students from Mt. Baker to go to college or technical school to expand their skills, open their minds, and check out where a higher education might lead them. In the 17+ years of volunteering for the Mt. Baker Scholarship Foundation, I have been thrilled and honored to help dozens of students get started, with many going on to complete degree programs (including my daughter Megan who recently completed her PhD) and walk through those doors to great opportunities!



**"Our Students,
Their Future,
Your Support"**

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.

\$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*; Theresa Sygitowicz, *Vice President*; Kim Raper, *Treasurer*; Neal Bittner, *Fundraising Chair*; Mary Zender, *Alumni Chair*; Joan Hammer, *Secretary*; Gail Kuromiya/Sue Lenssen, *Newsletter Co-Chairs*.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED