



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
June 8, 2010

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**ST. DAVID'S FOUNDATION TO GRANT HEALTH CARE SCHOLARSHIPS**  
*Funds raised from Toast of the Town to aid 31 Central Texas students*

**AUSTIN** – St. David's Foundation announced today that 31 scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors in the Central Texas area. Formal presentation of the scholarships will take place on August 10th at a special ceremony in Austin.

"These students are truly remarkable," said Earl Maxwell, Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation. "Many have overcome extensive adversity to rise to the top of their class. We believe that they will all become valuable and effective healthcare professionals in the coming years."

The St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Fund provides students with \$6,000 per year for four years, to be used for tuition and other expenses at Texas universities and colleges. Applicants must be graduating seniors within the independent school districts of Travis, Williamson, or Hays counties, and in pursuit of healthcare-related careers.

Funds for the scholarships are raised annually from Toast of the Town, a series of fundraising parties held each spring, now in its 26th year. In 2010 over \$310,000 was raised for the scholarship fund. In addition, the Foundation will match the funds raised by Toast of the Town for a total of over \$600,000 given to scholarship recipients.

As part of the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship program, a mentor from St. David's HealthCare will be paired with each scholarship recipient, providing students with the opportunity to interact directly with professionals in their chosen career.

One of those mentors is Dr. Steve Berkowitz, Chief Medical Officer for St. David's HealthCare, who said, "It has been a wonderful experience to provide guidance and support to these bright, hard-working young students. I am excited about what the future holds for these impressive students, and feel that both mentor and student have benefited from this experience."

On August 10th, St. David's Foundation will conduct a daylong college preparatory workshop for the recipients, where they will meet their mentors. The day will culminate in a special presentation banquet attended by the scholarship recipients and their families.

**THE ST. DAVID'S NEAL KOCUREK SCHOLARSHIP FUND:**

St. David's Foundation established the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship fund to honor its late president and CEO, W. Neal Kocurek, Ph.D. (1936-2004). The scholarship program seeks students who embody Dr. Kocurek's commitment to leadership and community service in Central Texas.

## **ST. DAVID'S FOUNDATION:**

The vision of St. David's Foundation is to keep the promise of a better life by improving health and health care for all Central Texans. As a joint owner of St. David's HealthCare, the Foundation achieves its goals by investing the proceeds from the hospitals back into Central Texas. In 2010, the Foundation will directly invest \$27 million in the community through grants to mental health agencies, agencies serving older adults, ill and homeless populations, and many of the area's private safety net clinics, and the St. David's Dental Program. For more information on St. David's Foundation, visit [www.stdavidsfoundation.org](http://www.stdavidsfoundation.org).

## **RECIPIENT STORIES**

Below please find biographical background information about a few of the 2010 St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholars. Many of this year's recipients have faced challenges in their lives that have inspired them to pursue a medical career that will allow them to help others.

**Fortune Unegbu** - Soon to graduate from Lanier High School in Austin, Fortune will attend the University of Texas at Austin in the fall as a Pre-Med major to study family medicine. Out of a class of 275 students, Fortune is ranked 9th in his class, and has been on the Honor Roll since 9th grade. His interests include football, wrestling, track, and the Keystone and Atlas Club. Originally from Nigeria, Fortune learned English through instruction from his father, and by spending several hours in the library after school each day. Because he had so recently arrived in the U.S., it was recommended that he study English as a Second Language, but Fortune and his father insisted that he be placed in Advanced Placement courses so that the class work would be more challenging. As predicted by Fortune and his father, he is now within the top 10% of his graduating class. While living in Nigeria the first eight years of his life, Fortune witnessed the effects of the lack of good medical care. The memories of the suffering of people in his village have motivated Fortune to seek a career as a doctor.

"Staying focused on a goal and having a strong internal motivation will help me to pursue a healthcare career. I will work harder than I have ever worked before to reach my career choice."  
~ Fortune Unegbu

**Rachel Espinoza** - Rachel is a senior at Lehman High School in Kyle, and plans to attend Austin Community College in the fall as a Nursing major. As the mother of a thirteen-month-old daughter, Rachel is highly motivated to help build a strong future for her daughter.

Rachel achieved an academic ranking of 40th out of 328 students, and has been on the A-B Honor Roll for the last three years. Rachel's interests include volleyball, Health Occupations Students of America, student athletic training, and the Leo Club. Rachel finds time to volunteer at the San Marcos Activity Center with the Youth Volleyball League and the Lehman High School Pep Center as a Parent Representative.

"Whether you're an adult or teen, parents are seen as leaders, teachers, and most importantly role models. When you become a parent you realize that every responsibility is doubled and your actions affect more than just yourself." ~ Rachel Espinoza

**Tevon Hood** - From Del Valle High school, Tevon will attend the University of Texas at Austin in the fall as a Pre-Med major to study pediatrics. Tevon finished 8th out of 312 students at Del Valle High School.

Aside from academics, some of Tevon's interests include basketball and cross country track. Tevon's family has faced some medical challenges, which has served to motivate him to pursue a career in the healthcare arena.

He helps out around the house, and works a part-time job on the weekends to help with household expenses. Tevon has earned his Certified Nurses Assistance license, his CPR license, and has remained on the honor roll for the last four years. In Tevon's own words, "I can't think about where I'm not or what I don't have, but what I can do and where I want to go." ~ Tevon Hood

**Ryan Roe** - A May 2010 graduate of Georgetown High School, Ryan finished 39th out of 646 students in his class. He plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin in the fall as a Pre-Physical Therapy major, to study athletic medicine. Ryan became aware of the number of homeless students in attendance at Georgetown High, and the need they had for basic everyday items most people take for granted. Ryan decided to do something about it and began a program called Eagle Locker at his high school. He took on the position of President and began collecting items such as soap, toothpaste, snacks, socks, and many more items to share with the students.

In the last year, Ryan has managed to grow the organization into a nonprofit success--he has more than tripled the number of volunteers, and the school is currently looking into expansion in other parts of the community. In addition to his civic service with Eagle Locker, Ryan has been an athletic trainer for four years; he is Student Council President; a member of the National Honor Society, a volunteer for PALS (peer mentoring), and a member of the Spanish Club. "I am a hard worker and when I am passionate about something, such as helping others obtain a high quality of life, I strive to do my best and give everything necessary to achieve that." ~ Ryan Roe