

The Minot Daily News

May 10, 2008

Students allowed to dream big dreams

BNSF Foundation funds scholarships for students who have placed academics first

By **ANDREA JOHNSON**

Staff Writer

ajohnson@minotdailynews.com

Area students can dream bigger thanks to the Horatio Alger Scholarships, which are given to students who have placed academics first while facing and overcoming obstacles. The North Dakota scholarships are funded by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation

Ariel Kenny, who will graduate from Bishop Ryan High School in Minot this month, said she probably would not be considering colleges such as Western Washington University or the University of Hawaii if she hadn't been one of 25 students in the state to receive the \$5,000 scholarship. Teachers at the school thought she would



Kenny



Johnson

qualify for the scholarship, one of a dwindling few that takes into account the financial need of the student. The minimum GPA to apply for the scholarship is 2.0. Kenny's GPA is much higher than

that, but she said she understands how difficult it can be for students who are dealing with financial or domestic turmoil to keep grades up.

Getting the Horatio Alger Scholarship boosted her self esteem and made her think she should try for a loftier goal than a community college. She dreams of studying zoology because "it's always been my passion." She has volunteered at the Roosevelt Park Zoo and loves animals.

Kenny has assumed more responsibilities than most teenagers her age and has dealt with some family difficulties over the years, said principal Terry Voiles. She's come out ahead thanks to her own hard work and determination and some guidance along the way.

Kenny, who's been working since she was 15, currently manages the Dairy Queen at Dakota Square Mall, overseeing older workers. She works there easily five days a week. School work has to wait until she's already put in a full day at work and at school, but she said she gets her academic work done regardless. It's too hard to go to sleep right away with her mind still active from work or school, so that's the best time for her to do homework, she said.

Kenny has attended Catholic

schools since elementary school and said she appreciates the close, supportive atmosphere at the school. One person, a former school secretary at Ryan, has gone through some of the same things Kenny has and was always a person she could talk to. That secretary was a great role model for her because Kenny could see what she had accomplished in life.

For Benjamin Johnson, a scholarship recipient from Divide County High School in Crosby, the scholarship was also welcome.

Johnson's difficulties have focused on growing up in a rural community and dealing with a sporadic income in agriculture. Johnson helps his dad out on the farm and works part time at a gas station in town. He's also paid close attention to his academic performance. He plans to use the scholarship to help pay for his education at North Dakota State University in Fargo, where he plans to major in engineering.

Other area honorees include: Dakota Anderson, Velva High School; Christopher Ellingson, Maddock High School; Tarren Jundt and Meghan Theil, both Williston High School; Meredith Kuntz and Benjamin Mertens, both Devils Lake High School; and Joshua Nelson, Des Lacs-Burlington High School.