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Kaitlyn Beyer Awarded 2012 MSU Pride Scholarship; Denzel McCampbell and Erica Shekell Awarded 2012 Pougnet and Green Scholarships

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Michigan State University freshman Kaitlyn Beyer is the 2012 recipient of the Pride Scholarship. The MSU Pride Scholarship was established in January of 2000 to aid incoming Michigan State students who are already active in the LGBT community. They must also show commitment to academic success.

Beyer, an incoming freshman in James Madison College, is a 2012 graduate of Lakeview High School in Battle Creek. She plans to major in either Social Relations and Policy or Comparative Cultures and Politics. She hopes to study abroad opportunities, including a trip to South Africa, and would like to join the Peace Corps after graduation. Beyer plans to work for equality in civil or human rights.

Serving as both secretary and vice president in her school’s Gay-Straight Alliance, Beyer has been involved in Pride Week, National Coming Out Day and Day of Silence events, as well as World AIDS Day and Suicide Prevention Week. She enters MSU with a 3.96 GPA. In her application essay, she challenged the use of the word “gay” as a casual epithet, showing her commitment to diversity and acceptance.

MSU seniors Denzel McCampbell and Erica Shekell are the 2012 recipients of the Steven P. Pougnet and Christopher J. Green Endowed Scholarship. The Pougnet and Green Scholarship is awarded annually to MSU juniors or seniors who demonstrate academic excellence and involvement with or contributions to the LGBT community.

Denzel McCampbell, originally from Detroit, is a senior double majoring in General Management and Political Science. He has served as a Legislative Intern in the Michigan State House of Representatives, and currently works in Lansing as Field Director for the campaign of Andy Schor for State Representative. McCampbell is a leader in MSU’s student legislative body, the Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU), and is active in the campus LGBT community through his work with the LBGT Resource Center.

McCampbell participates in the LBGT Resource Center’s Speakers Bureau Program, which aims to decrease the stigma surrounding LGBT issues through discussion and education. Along with other members of Michigan State’s LGBT community, he has traveled both on and off campus to participate in panel discussions and answer questions about his unique experience as an African-American gay male.
In his application essay, McCampbell spoke of the importance of “helping people each and every day,” expressing a need to give back to those around him. Through his community involvement both at Michigan State and in local politics, he aims to “eradicate ignorance and promote a positive learning environment.”

Erica Shekell, from Howell, is a senior double majoring in Journalism and Media Arts and Technology, both through MSU’s College of Communication Arts and Sciences, with a specialization in Design. She works as a Multimedia Communications Writer for MSU’s University Relations department, and has previously worked as a research aide for a professor in the School of Journalism.

Shekell was one of 40 students who participated in the 2011 Student Freedom Ride from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans. She was selected out of a pool of over 1000 applicants nationwide to participate in the 10-day bus ride, which commemorated the desegregation of the American bus system in the South. Through connecting with other LGBTQA students on this trip, Shekell learned more about the interconnected nature of civil rights movements.

“Their struggles for a more just world have brought me to understand that the struggles of the LGBTQA community are deeply connected to the struggles of other communities—” Shekell wrote in her application essay, “—that social justice for the LGBTQA community is but one piece of the struggle for social justice for all people.”

Shekell is also a member of the student leadership team that is organizing the 2013 Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGACC) at Michigan State. As Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the conference, she created a comprehensive communications strategy and leads the effort to promote this major LGBT conference across 15 states. MBLGTACC will take place in February 2013, with an estimated 1700 in attendance.

If you have questions about the scholarships, please contact Michigan State’s LBGT Resource Center by e-mail at lbgtrc@msu.edu or by phone at (517) 353-9520.

To make a contribution to one of the scholarship programs, contact Jennifer Bertram, Associate Vice President for University Development, (517) 432-7330, bertram9@msu.edu.