Three outstanding students with visual impairments were presented with the inaugural Laura J. Kraska scholarships at the annual Disabled Student Development (DSD) awards program on April 9, 2013. The Laura Kraska scholarship is a gracious gift from the Kraska family in honor of Laura, who received her Bachelor’s degree from Ball State in 1990 and her Master’s in Information and Communication Sciences in 1993. Laura loved Ball State and benefitted from the services that DSD offered. The award presented in her memory will allow current Ball State students to follow her successful example.

Recipients of the Laura Kraska Award were Jacob Caudill, Brittany Feilen, and Amanda Rusk. These students were chosen based on their academic achievements, along with their involvements in campus life. Members of the Kraska family were in attendance to present the awards to these three students. In addition to a plaque to commemorate the award, they also received a scholarship for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Jacob Caudill is a senior Marketing major with a 3.6 GPA. Jacob, who has been admitted to the Master’s degree program in Information and Communication Sciences, has been very active in many areas on campus. Jacob has served as the vice president of Disabled Students in Action and has been a senator in the Student Government Association. He is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and a past recipient of the Fehribach Award.

Brittany Feilen, a senior Special Education major, carries a 3.4 GPA. Brittany has been a stalwart of Disabled Students in Action and currently serves as the organization’s secretary. She is employed at the iCare computer center on campus and is actively involved in her local church. Brittany is a former recipient of the Myrna Jean Bush scholarship.

Amanda Rusk is a junior double-majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology with a 3.4 GPA. Amanda had the opportunity during the 2011-2012 academic year to study abroad at the University of Worcester in England. She is a member of the conduct board in her residence hall and has assisted with research in the Psychology department.
Disabled Student Development (DSD) has long professed a mission of access and opportunity for students with disabilities. Fulfilling this mission would not be possible, however, without the constant support of colleagues on campus. Therefore, DSD presents a series of Access Awards each year to recognize faculty members, students, and staff who have gone above and beyond in providing access for those with disabilities. Through their positive contributions to the Ball State community and a commitment to equality, the following individuals were chosen to receive this award:

Christina Blanch, a Doctoral student in Adult, Community, and Higher Education, has worked with Larry Markle, Roger Wessel, and Lyn Jones in researching college decision and transitional issues for students who are wheelchair users. Blanch was a critical member of the research team, compiling a thorough literature review and interviewing several students with disabilities and their parents. Publication of this research is forthcoming, and the team is already presenting its findings at national conferences. In addition to this work, Blanch is teaching Gender Roles in Comic Books, Ball State’s first Massive Open Online Course.

Joel Bushman & Beth Wall, Residence Hall Directors in Ball State’s Noyer Complex, have demonstrated great awareness and understanding relative to accessibility in campus housing. Due to its reputation as a user-friendly facility, the Noyer Complex houses several of Ball State’s students with disabilities. Nonetheless, issues can arise when dealing with matters of facility-usage, attendant care, and accommodation. Bushman and Wall have done a tremendous job in working with students to circumvent these problems and have promoted inclusive and welcoming environments. Additionally, both have trained and supervised Resident Assistants who are wheelchair users. Some of these students are now considering further employment in Residence Life.

Judy Donahue, the Coordinator of Ball State’s Physical Fitness and Wellness program, has helped several students with disabilities fulfill a mandatory Physical Education requirement. As part of the core curriculum, Ball State students must take a course in walking, swimming, weight lifting, or a variety of other physical activities. Classes such as these can pose challenges for many students, particularly those with physical impairments. Donahue, displaying a commitment to accessibility, has listened to the concerns of her students and realigned course objectives to fit each person’s needs and abilities.

Dr. Jacqueline Harris, Coordinator of Study Strategies and Writing at the Learning Center, is a longtime partner of DSD. Harris oversees testing accommodations for students with disabilities and ensures that they have appropriate adaptations. Aside from her vast contributions to the Learning Center and being a nationally recognized leader in the administration of Learning Centers, she also co-founded the Faculty Mentorship Program (FMP)—a unique program that pairs incoming freshman with disabilities with faculty members in their prospective courses of study. Harris, along with a team of colleagues, once helped Ball State obtain a significant grant from the U.S. Department of Education. After 25 years of dedicated service, Harris will soon be retiring from the University.

Dr. Lynda Wiley, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, has provided supervision for DSD for the last several years. She has been a great advocate for students with disabilities and has supported the mission of accessibility in her administrative work. When the University transitioned to a new operating system in recent years, Wiley helped ensure that the system was navigable for students with all types of impairments. Moreover, she serves as a convener for Ball State’s Critical Incident Response Team, and has remained sensitive to the unique issues faced by students with medical and psychiatric disabilities. After 16 years as a member of the campus community, Dr. Wiley will be moving out of state with her family.
For several years, Disabled Student Development (DSD) has recognized an outstanding Ball State faculty member with the Accessible Teacher Award. In selecting a recipient for this honor, DSD solicits feedback from students about teachers who have gone above and beyond to provide access in their academic courses. By no means does this award signify that a teacher has made it easy for his or her students to pass. In fact, most nominees are described by their students as both challenging and accommodating. Much like previous recipients, this year’s Accessible Teacher Award winner was acknowledged for her creative approaches in the classroom and her commitment to ensuring equal opportunity and participation by students with disabilities.

This year’s recipient was Dr. Darolyn Jones, an Associate Professor in Ball State’s English department. Dr. Jones describes herself as both a teacher and a writer. She has a strong passion for literacy in and out of the classroom and has dedicated nearly 20 years of her professional life to this topic. While at Ball State, she has served as a key member of DSD’s Faculty Mentorship Program and has initiated a comprehensive research project, focusing on students who use wheelchairs and their respective decisions to attend college.

Aside from her career as an academic, Dr. Jones fulfills an even greater role. On a day-to-day basis, she also serves as a caring provider for her eight year old son, Will, who has cerebral palsy. Accepting her award at the DSD awards program on April 9th, Dr. Jones noted how the experiences she has had with her son have helped her become a more efficient and accessible educator. “I advocate for all of my students, all the time,” she said. “They are at the front of every instructional decision I make, and that was true even before I had my own son with a disability. It just became truer, and more poignant, and more critical after I had a son.”

Max Adamson Award winner, Donelle Henderlong, presenting the Accessible Teacher Award to Dr. Lyn Jones

Presenting Dr. Jones with the Accessible Teacher Award, senior Donelle Henderlong stated, “She should be recognized, not only for being a good teacher, but for being a great mom. Will and I are doing great things, mostly because we have mothers like my mom and like Dr. Jones.”

The Max Adamson Award is presented each year to a distinguished senior with a disability who has demonstrated academic success, positive campus involvement, and a commitment to helping others. Named for the late Max Adamson, a student who helped Ball State make great strides toward physical accessibility for those with disabilities, the award this year was presented to Donelle Henderlong, a student who displayed consistent academic success and leadership throughout her time at Ball State. Donelle has worked diligently toward a degree in English, earning a GPA of 3.8. She has also served as a Residence Assistant for two years in the Noyer Complex—a housing unit recognized for its numerous, accessible amenities.

In an interview with Nequel Burwell, an Assistant Residence Hall Director in Noyer, Donelle was described as “a pleasure to work with.” She was also credited for her positive attitude and ability to take initiative. “Donelle is a wonderful leader, and the positions she has held on Ball State’s campus reiterate that,” Burwell said. “The staff has learned so much from Donelle. She has taken people out of their comfort zones and educated them, without even knowing it.”

In addition to her work as an RA for two years, Donelle served as an Orientation Leader, was a member the 2012 Ball State Homecoming Court, the University Review Board, and she was selected as the 2011 National Residence Hall Honorary student of the year.

Donelle will continue her studies at Ball State next year in the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education (SAAHE) graduate program. As part of this program, Donelle is scheduled to be the Graduate Assistant for DSD.
COMMUNIQUE

2013 Harris-Rose Outstanding Alumnus: Audie Kemp

For several years, Disabled Student Development (DSD) has presented the Outstanding Alumnus Award to a Ball State graduate with a disability. This award is presented on an annual basis to one alumnus who has demonstrated success in his or her life outside of Ball State. It is named in honor of Richard Harris, the Director Emeritus of DSD, as well as a former student by the name of Bruce Rose who assisted Harris in establishing Ball State’s positive reputation as a disability-friendly campus.

This year’s Outstanding Alumnus was Audie Kemp, a member of the graduating class of 1996. During his time at Ball State, Audie pursued a Bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science and was heavily involved in Adaptive Physical Education. These interests have continued on to the present day; Audie now serves as the Head Coach for the RHI Racers, a wheelchair basketball team based out of Indianapolis. He is also on the Board of Directors for the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Sports Program, which specializes in offering adaptive sports and recreational opportunities for Indiana citizens with disabilities.

Since graduating from Ball State, Audie has established a successful career as a Rehabilitation Technology Specialist at ATG Rehab, one of the nation’s largest seating and mobility equipment providers. In this role, he inspects various mobility products to ensure that they are a proper fit for individuals with disabilities. His responsibilities also include the evaluation of adaptive computer and environmental controls. With over a decade of experience in his current position, Audie is now a certified Assistive Technology Professional.

Commenting on Audie’s expansive list of post-graduate successes, Richard Harris made the following statement: “Audie was such an enthusiastic and participatory undergraduate. Therefore, I am not at all surprised by all he’s accomplished with his family and his profession.”

Audie and his wife, Theresa, were married in 2000 and currently live in Westfield, Indiana. Both of their daughters—Isabelle (age 8) and Lucy (age 6)—are involved in youth softball and basketball. Fittingly, Audie is actively involved in coaching their teams.

Dustin Gilmer: Gilbert Scholarship & Award Winner

Dustin Gilmer, a student interested in both Telecommunications and Journalism, has been selected as the 2012-2013 Adrienne Paige Gilbert scholarship recipient. This annual award, made possible by Jeff and Kay Gilbert, is named in honor of their beloved daughter, Adrienne Paige. Born with a genetic bone disease called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, Adrienne lived a brief, yet meaningful life. In her memory, the Gilberts hope this scholarship will allow students with disabilities to achieve their academic goals at Ball State.

Pictured is Dustin Gilmer, this year’s recipient of the Gilbert scholarship. Aside from his work in the classroom, Dustin is a regular contributor to Ball State’s student media productions and serves as the current president of the Power Soccer Club.
For the fifth consecutive year, Ball State’s office of Disabled Student Development (DSD) has presented the Fehribach Award to a group of exceptional students with disabilities. This honor, named after Ball State alumnus Greg Fehribach and his wife Mary Beth, recognizes students for their outstanding academic work and efforts to improve access and opportunity for others. The Fehribachs are longtime supporters of DSD and have made numerous contributions to enhance the college experience for Ball State students with disabilities. In a similar way, the following students have furthered a mission of accessibility, either through direct action or by setting a positive example. In addition to receiving a commemorative plaque, these students were also given a cash award.

Sifat Baig, a previous recipient of the Adrienne Paige Gilbert scholarship, has benefited the Ball State community through his involvements both inside and outside of the classroom. A senior Psychology major, Sifat has served as a Research Assistant for Dr. Paul Biner, gathering information on a variety of topics related to his area of study. He has also participated in a research project designed to explore the college decisions of wheelchair users. Sifat additionally is a founding member of the Ball State Power Soccer team.

Frances Janovitz is a senior with a dual major in Elementary and Special Education. Balancing a heavy academic workload, she has been able to maintain an impressive GPA of over 3.9. This achievement allowed her to gain recognition from the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the Golden Key National Honor Society. Meanwhile, Frances has posted an extensive list of co-curricular involvements as well. She has served as co-president for the Student Council for Exceptional Children, which exists to improve learning outcomes for students with mental and physical disabilities. She also worked with the grade appeals committee and was an active member of a search team organized for the Director of the Office of Teaching and Education Services.

Megan Miller is a senior majoring in Speech Pathology and Audiology. Throughout her time at Ball State, Megan has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA and has made consistent progress toward her degree. She is a current member of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) and was recently recognized by Mortar Board—a prestigious honor society for college seniors who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service. In terms of volunteer work, Megan has contributed to the Pilot Club of Muncie, a unique service organization committed to helping those with brain-related disorders, and is a member of her church choir.

Andrew Neylon is a senior English major. While at Ball State, he has compiled a 3.8 GPA and has built an impressive résumé of co-curricular activities. Andrew worked for WCRD, the University’s student-run radio station and served as a captain on the Ball State Speech Team. Moreover, he provided supplemental instruction to a group of students enrolled in a freshman-level History course. Having already completed the course, Andrew met with these students on various occasions to review pertinent themes covered in class lectures. In addition to this role, Andrew was also a member of the Freshman Reader selection committee—a group responsible for reviewing a list of books and choosing a common reader for incoming students.

Yaw Owusu-Akyaw is a senior Special Education major with a current GPA of 3.8. In addition to his fine academic work, Yaw has been heavily involved outside of the classroom, serving as a member of the Cycling Club, Club Japan, Cardinal Filmworks, and Late Nite—a student-run program that administers creative events and campus entertainment on Saturday nights. Yaw has also been employed with the Student Center, assisting in Building Operations, and has contributed to multiple organizations related to his major. These organizations include Education in Action and the Student Council for Exceptional Children.
Don’t forget BSU’s Disabled Student Development in your giving plans.

Funds donated are used for resources and equipment to enhance campus accessibility.

All Indiana taxpayers’ donations to BSU Foundation - 8603 are a 50 percent tax credit (a $100 gift costs only $50)!

The DSD Communique is published once a semester by the Office of Disabled Student Development for the students, faculty, alumni, staff, and friends of Ball State University.

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If you are a BSU/DSD alumni and have news you would like to share with the readers of this newsletter, please drop us a line or two about anything you’d like us to know, such as accomplishments, events, or milestones. Please notify us about a change in address as well.

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