Sara Mahoney: Harris-Rose Outstanding Alum Award Recipient

The Harris-Rose Outstanding Alum Award is named after Director Emeritus of Disability Services Richard Harris and Bruce Rose, a former student who helped Harris transform Ball State into the accessible place that it is today. The award is given each year to a Ball State graduate who has shown persistence and success in life after Ball State.

This year’s recipient is Sara Mahoney. Sara completed her undergraduate degree at St. Mary’s of the Woods and is a 2006 graduate of the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education (SAAHE) Master’s degree program at Ball State. She is the former Graduate Assistant for Disability Services and collaborated with the Career Center on the hireAbility program for students with disabilities. Currently, Sara is an Equal Employment Specialist for the U.S. Department of State-Office of Civil Rights in Washington D.C., where she promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace and implements programming promoting employment initiatives for people with disabilities. Previously, Sara worked as a Learning Skills Specialist at Georgetown University and Associate Director of Student Life as well as the Senior Programmer for Disability Services at the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars.

In speaking of Sara, Harris said he was “blown away” when he met Sara as an undergraduate by the way she advocated for accessibility at St. Mary’s of the Woods: “Sara has led by personal example and professional work, and Ball State and the Office of Disability Services are just so proud of her.” Director of Disability Services Larry Markle was new to this position when Sara was his Graduate Assistant, and he credits the ease of his transition in part to Sara’s work.

Sara indicated that she enjoyed coming to Ball State to receive her award and was able to meet up with old colleagues and friends, as well as have lunch with current students. At the awards program, Sara expressed gratitude for the support she received from Richard Harris, Larry Markle, and SAAHE Program Director Dr. Roger Wessel throughout her journey. Sara also reminded students, “Once you gain employment, be sure to reach out to bring younger folks so that people with disabilities continue to have a presence in the employment sector.”
The Max Adamson Award is Disability Services’ top student award, given to an outstanding graduating student who has shown academic achievement and extracurricular involvement, as well as the commitment to creating access and opportunity for others. This award is named after Max Adamson, a student who was key in advocating for accessibility across campus. Although Max passed away several years ago, his spirit continues in the recipients of this award.

This year’s recipient of the Max Adamson Award is Megan Miller. Megan is a graduate student in the Speech Pathology program and earned her undergraduate degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology from Ball State in 2013. Throughout these two programs, Megan has maintained a 4.0 grade point average. She is a graduate clinician in the Speech-Language clinic and will complete an internship this summer. Megan has won several awards during her time at Ball State, including the Indiana Speech-Hearing Association Scholarship, the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education’s Rutherford Porter Scholarship, the Ball State University President’s Citation of Academic Excellence, and Disability Services’ Fehribach Award.

In receiving her award, Megan recognized the support of the Disability Services office, her family and friends, and department: “I am very proud of my accomplishments, but this award just shows the support system that I have. I am so grateful for all of them. I appreciate the Disability Services office for treating their students like adults in allowing us to have independence, but providing support when we need it.”

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**Photos from the 2015 Awards Program**

Dom Caristi  
Megan Miller  
Sara Mahoney  
Will Kuhn with Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach
The Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach Awards have been given annually to students by Ball State alumnus and prominent Indianapolis attorney Greg Fehribach and his wife Mary Beth since 2008. While at Ball State, Greg served as student body president and then later went on to serve on the Ball State University Board of Trustees. He is currently a Distinguished Fellow at Ball State’s Bowen Center in the Political Science department and is a renowned expert on ADA accessibility standards. Both Greg and Mary Beth continue to be generous to Disability Services through their financial contributions and time spent meeting with students, particularly in regards to the Eskenazi Health Internship Program. The Fehribach Awards are given to students who set and maintain high academic standards for themselves and are involved in the Ball State community outside of the classroom.

In presenting students with the awards, Greg stressed the importance of the role of the university in the lives of students with disabilities: “The university is not the end of the road, but the beginning of the road for students with disabilities. While it can be difficult for students with disabilities to stay on the economic road to sustainability, the university does a great job facilitating internships, employment, and the idea that people with disabilities are able to stand on their own economically. Continue to push yourselves and others toward the road to success, and when you come to a ‘Y’ in the road, take it.”

**Elise Basiletti** is a senior Special Education major and has maintained a 3.8 GPA. In addition to working at two Chick-Fil-A restaurants, she is involved on campus through many roles with Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship and ASL Club. Last year, Elise took part in a residential program at the Indiana School for the Deaf, and continues to educate the Ball State community on her disability by volunteering to speak in classroom panels and presentations.

**Julie Bloom** is a senior with a dual major in Special Education and Elementary Education and has maintained a GPA over 3.0. Julie is very active on campus including participating in Ball State Dance Marathon and the Student-Alumni Relations Team (S.A.R.T) for four years. She has held many leadership roles within Kappa Delta sorority and has connected with the Muncie community by volunteering with Beyond I Can, the Buley Center, and the Muncie Animal Shelter.

**Derrick Decker** is a senior Athletic Training major with a 3.1 GPA. He is a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and the Ball State Athletic Training Club. Derrick has obtained a lot of field experience during his time at Ball State, working with Ball State’s football, men’s basketball, women’s volleyball, and women’s softball teams, as well as many local high schools and Henry County Sports Medicine and Performance Enhancement. Last summer, Derrick interned with the Indianapolis Colts as part of the Athletic Training department. We wish Derrick the best of luck as he begins graduate school at the University of Missouri.

**Will Kuhn** is a senior Telecommunications major and is a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, where he serves as the Athletics Chair. He is also a member of the Ball State Power Soccer Team and served on the Technology and Fundraising committees for Ball State Dance Marathon. Will is a member of the Ball State Student Trustee Selection Committee and interned last summer with Eskenazi Health as part of the Communications department and will return to Eskenazi this summer.

**Malia Finch** is a senior Legal Studies major and has maintained a 3.6 GPA. During her time at Ball State, Malia has served as a Resident Assistant, Multicultural Advisor, and co-teacher of EDHI 200 within Housing and Residence Life. Additionally she is a member of the Legal Studies Student Association, and a Peer Advocate for the Office of Victim Services. She has also served in the Muncie community as a volunteer at Longfellow Elementary School.

**Amanda Rusk** is a senior Criminal Justice major with a 3.5 GPA. She has been a member of the conduct board and has been employed at the Adaptive Computer Technology Lab on campus. Amanda enjoys traveling and was able to study abroad in England for a year and do follow-up trips in the summer. Currently, she is interning with the Delaware County Adult Probation Office. Amanda hopes to attend graduate school in England.
Laura J. Kraska Awards

This is the third year that Disability Services has presented the Laura J. Kraska Awards. This award was established by generous donations by the Kraska family in memory of Laura Kraska. Laura, a student with low vision, received her Bachelor’s degree in 1990 as well as her Master’s in 1993 from Ball State in Communication and Information Studies. The selection committee for this award, made up of Disability Services staff members and Adaptive Technology Specialist Carlos Taylor, looks for students with visual impairments who do well in the classroom and are active members of the Ball State community. Recipients of this award will receive a generous scholarship given by the Kraska family in addition to a nice plaque. Members of the Kraska family (Tom, Kathleen, Kristin, and Tim) presented the awards to this year’s recipients.

Tara Abella is a sophomore with a dual major in Special Education and Elementary Education, with a 3.97 GPA. She is very involved on campus with the Alliance for Disability Awareness, the Student Council for Exceptional Children, Social Justice in Education, Lutheran Student Fellowship, and Up Till Dawn, which raises money for the St. Jude Foundation. This summer, Tara will be interning at Bosma Enterprises in Indianapolis.

Goitse Ookeditse is a Doctoral student and comes to Ball State from Botswana. Goitse received his Master’s degree from Ball State and is currently working on his Doctorate in Special Education. He is a member of BSU’s African Student Association and a volunteer in the Special Education department at Storer Elementary School in Muncie. Goitse has also served as a Botswana Consultant for the University of Kentucky’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), reviewing research studies regarding Botswana.

Devin Summan is a junior Communication Studies major. He is involved with the Ball State Speech Team and the Worship Team for Campus Crusade for Christ. Devin is also involved in the Muncie community through the Muncie Civic Theatre, where he was recently in a production of Peter Pan.

Accessible Teacher Award

The Accessible Teacher Award is chosen based upon student nominations and is given to a teacher who has demonstrated excellent commitment to accessibility within the classroom. Recipients of this award make their classes accessible by not making them easier for students with disabilities, but by seeking out ways to accommodate in order to afford the same opportunities for all students.

This year’s recipient is Dom Caristi of the Telecommunications Department, nominated by junior Alex Gilland. In presenting Dom with the award Alex said, “Dom was my mentor in the Faculty Mentorship Program, so it was an easy choice to pick him as my TCOM advisor. He is heavily involved within the Telecommunications Department as well as the Fulbright program. He always answers e-mails and is available, which can be hard in our department.”

In receiving the award, Dom said, “It is a delight to teach good students with a desire to learn like Alex, who know what they want and what works best for them. It is also a pleasure to work with such an accessible office as Disability Services.”
Access Awards

Ball State has a great number of staff outside of Disability Services who are terrific partners in providing access to students with disabilities. The Access Awards are given to faculty and staff members who go above and beyond in ensuring open and accessible environments within the Ball State community.

Becky Isaacs is the Assistant Director of Housing in charge of all room assignments within the residence halls. Becky is very responsive to the housing needs of our students with both physical and non-physical disabilities and has a very positive attitude in making sure students are placed in a space that meets those needs.

Patricia Lang is a Professor of Chemistry and formerly the Department Chair. She has been instrumental in making sure the Chemistry department is accessible to students with apparent and non-apparent disabilities. Recently, Patricia and colleague Daniel Miller were named Diversity Fellows by Ball State’s Office of Institutional Diversity and offered a presentation on using universal design concepts to make chemistry labs accessible to students with mental illness.

Loren Malm is the Associate Vice President of Information Technology. As the use of technology continues to increase on campus and as part of the curriculum, Loren works diligently to ensure that technology vendors providing software to the university are held accountable to accessibility standards.

June Payne is the Director of the Counseling Center and has been a terrific partner for the Disability Services staff for years. As the number of students reporting psychological disabilities has risen, June makes sure that her staff is trained thoroughly on disability issues and that the Counseling Center is a valuable resource for students. We wish June the best of luck as she retires this year.

Ben Peak is the Assistant Director of Recreation Services and serves as a great point person regarding accessibility issues at the Recreation Center. Ben makes sure that students have access to appropriate facilities and equipment when they are looking to play adaptive sports like Power Soccer and Wheelchair Basketball, or to workout at one of the facilities on campus.

Joel Whitesel is the Director of iLearn, which oversees Ball State’s Online & Distance Education programs. As more and more students begin to take online courses and join online-only programs, it is crucial that they are accessible to all students. Joel has been very prompt in addressing accessibility concerns with online classes and programs so that students with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in online learning.

Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship

The Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship was established by Kay and Jeff Gilbert in memory of their daughter, Adrienne Paige. Adrienne was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. She only lived for four months, but her life touched all who knew her. It is the Gilberts’ hope that this scholarship will allow others with disabilities to further their college education in honor of their daughter.

This year’s recipient is Josh Spray. Josh is a sophomore Sports Administration Major. He is a member of Phi Gamma Nu, Water Polo Club, and the Sports Administration Association. Josh is also part of the Excellence in Leadership program.
Don’t forget BSU’s Disability Services 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 DS Communique is published once a semester by the Office of Disability Services for the students, faculty, alumni, staff, and friends of Ball State University.

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If you are a BSU/DS 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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