My favorite day of the year is our annual awards program in which we congratulate outstanding students and a successful alum with a disability, and recognize faculty and staff members for accessibility assistance. Our program this year was on April 5, and we were pleased that over 130 people were in attendance. The pages of this newsletter describe the awards given and the recipients of the awards. I believe you will be especially impressed with the great achievements of our students – some of Ball State’s best and brightest.

Thank you, and I hope you enjoy our spring semester newsletter.

Larry Markle, Director
Disability Services

40th Annual Disability Services Awards Program

Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach Awards

Each year, Disability Services recognizes outstanding students with disabilities with awards named in honor of Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach, long time Disability Services supporters. Greg, a prominent Indianapolis attorney, was student body President as an undergraduate at Ball State and is a former member of the university’s Board of Trustees. He currently serves Ball State as a Distinguished Fellow for the Disability Project, a program designed to facilitate economic and employment opportunities for college graduates with physical disabilities. Students who have done well in the classroom and who have furthered the cause of access and opportunity either through direct action and/or through their example are chosen to receive Fehribach awards. The Fehribachs presented awards to six students this year.

Tanner Barton is a senior Health Science and Spanish major from Dublin, Ohio. In addition to being a terrific student with a 4.0 grade point average, Tanner is an inaugural member of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Co-editor of the College Diabetes Survival Guide. Tanner is also a part of the Ball State swim team and is the team captain this year. He represented all male Mid-American Conference student-athletes this year at the NCAA Leadership Summit.

Alex Gilland is a junior from Osgood, Indiana majoring in Telecommunications with a 3.7 GPA. Alex was a 2014 Kraska award winner. He is a member of the staff of WCRD (Ball State’s radio station), and interned at Emmis communications.

Greg & Mary Beth Fehribach with 2016 Fehribach Award winners. From left: Luke Labas, Tanner Barton, Alex Gilland, Lauren Slaven, Sari Hammerstrom, Brad Millspaugh, Mary Beth and Greg Fehribach
Preston Radtke: 2016 Max Adamson Award Recipient

The top student award that Disability Services presents each year is the Max Adamson Award. This award is given to a graduating student with a disability who excels academically, is involved on campus, and believes in creating access and opportunity for others. The award is named in honor of Max Adamson, a student who attended Ball State from 1976-1985. Max was a key figure in developing Ball State to the level of accessibility that it is today. Although he passed several years ago, Max’s memory thrives in those who knew him.

This year the award was given to Preston Radtke, a senior Public Relations major with a 3.8 grade point average from Arlington Heights, IL. He is a previous recipient of the Kraska Award, given annually to students with visual impairments. Preston serves as a Lab Assistant in the Adaptive Technology Lab, and has been involved in many activities on campus, including: Hall Council, Residence Hall Association, Daily News, Philosophy Club, BSU Swing Society, Cardinal Communications, Student Government Association, and the Ball State Summit Campaign Team. Preston also interned at Eskenazi Health last summer as part of the Disability Project. He plans to return to Ball State in the fall as a graduate student in Information and Communication Sciences.

Accepting the award, Preston said, “It’s very humbling to be a recipient of this award. I never thought I could possibly be up here accepting this award. When I came to Ball State I was like any other college freshman, unsure of what a disabled student could do and unsure of my abilities. Larry Markle, Carlos Taylor, and the Disability Office put me at ease if I had trouble. I want to thank my professors and instructors who I’ve had over the past years, the majority of whom had never had a student with a visual impairment in their class. By-and-large all of them were very accommodating.” He also thanked his parents who have always supported him and never told him ‘no.’ Preston said they just let him know when a decision wasn’t as great as he thought it was.

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 Gilbergs’ hope that this scholarship will allow others with disabilities to further their college education in honor of their daughter.

This year’s recipient is Lizzie Ford. Lizzie is a sophomore Psychology major with a 3.97 grade point average. She is currently a Resident Assistant in Noyer and is a member of Sigma Kappa. Lizzie plays a vital role as Social Media Chair in the Alliance for Disability Awareness group on campus and was previously a Senator in the Student Government Association.

2016 Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship winner Lizzie Ford.
Accessible Teacher Award

Each year Disability Services encourages students to nominate teachers who have gone above and beyond to make their classes accessible for the Accessible Teacher award. The award is presented to a professor who has upheld the university standards and expectations of academic work, and at the same time made sure students with disabilities received every opportunity to learn and participate.

This year we received several strong nominations and selected Kathy Denker from Communication Studies as the winner of the Accessible Teacher award. Dr. Denker coordinates the public speaking course at Ball State which all students are required to take.

Sari Hammerstrom nominated Kathy and shared why she made the nomination: “[Dr. Denker] impacted my career from start to finish. Because of Dr. Denker, I overcame my fear of public speaking. She also inspired me to become a Communications Studies major. During my junior year, when exams became more difficult, she offered her office as a safe and quiet place for me to work.”

In addition to her assistance with Sari, Dr. Denker has facilitated access to the public speaking course for students with a variety of disabilities, including students with physical, learning, and psychological disabilities. Though the course can be intimidating for many students, it has not been a barrier to graduation for a student with a disability because of the good work that Kathy and her staff have done in accommodating students.

In receiving the award Dr. Denker stated that she is “so humbled and honored to receive this award. I have been so lucky and thankful to work with staff members who have been so central to me better helping our students.”

Sari Hammerstrom presents Kathy Denker with the 2016 Accessible Teacher Award.

continued from page 1

last summer. This semester he was part of an immersive learning project team through the Virginia Ball Center. Each year the Virginia Ball Center chooses four faculty and 15 students to participate in interdisciplinary, immersive seminars. This semester, Alex is working with a team to create a film about Middletown today, a follow up to the legendary 1920s study about Muncie.

Sari Hammerstrom has been a student worker in the Disability Office for the past two years. She is a senior from Indianapolis studying Communication Studies. Sari is a member of the Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority and was the Sigma Chi Fraternity Female Ambassador and raised $1,000 for the Huntsman Cancer Institute. During her time at Ball State she participated in several disability panels to better inform students on disabilities. After graduation she will be moving to Denver, CO, where she will be working for Henry Schein selling dental equipment and technology.

Luke Labas is a junior Political Science major from Fort Wayne, IN. Luke is a Power Soccer star for the Turnstone Flyers. He also spends time in Fort Wayne as part of a leadership team for a ministry at his home church. Luke provides training for hotels on accessibility issues and participated in the Bowen Institute on Public Affairs in April. Luke will be doing an internship at Eskenazi Health this summer.

Brad Millsbaugh is a senior from Muncie majoring in Industrial Technology. Prior to attending Ball State, Brad worked for many years at General Motors in Muncie and Bowling Green, KY. Brad also won first place at a Computer Technology Annual Case Study Competition. He will be doing an internship at Eskenazi Health this summer.

Lauren Slaven is the Vice President for the Ball State University Alliance for Disability Awareness student group. She is a junior Geography major with a 4.0 grade point average. Lauren also participates in the Disability Conversation Hour and the Ball State Anthropomorphic Art Society. She is a staff member and weather forecaster at WCRD and the Vice President for the Friends of the Yorktown Public Library Board.
Providing access and opportunity for students with disabilities is a campus wide effort. It is a collaborative partnership between departments and across disciplines. The ACCESS Awards are given to members of the Ball State community who go above and beyond ensuring access for students with disabilities.

Debbie Ellison is the Program Coordinator for Online and Distance Education. As more classes are being offered online, more students are taking them as part of their curriculum. Many students with disabilities take online classes as part of their program, and Debbie is a point person in helping to resolve concerns students may have with these classes.

Ro-Anne Royer Engle is the Director of the Multicultural Center here on campus. Her job is to promote diversity in all aspects on campus. She is always making sure her programming is accessible to all students and has also partnered with Disability Services on programs to increase disability awareness on campus.

Jennifer Haley is a Coordinator at the Learning Center. Jennifer is very helpful with students with disabilities who need tutoring and will often help with additional sessions as needed. She actively seeks out ways to be more inclusive of students with disabilities at the Learning Center.

Amanda Kruse is a Wellness Nutritionist in Dining. She has been helpful with the growing number of students on campus with food allergies and other dietary concerns. Dining on campus goes above and beyond to be helpful to these students. On top of that, Amanda also meets individually with students with dietary concerns to plan the best meal options on campus for them.

Gloria Pavlik works in Ball State’s Retention and Graduation office. She works with sophomores and transfer students to make sure they know and use resources to be successful at Ball State. She is attuned to disability resources and issues and has often walked students to Disability Services.

Anne Plassman: Harris-Rose Outstanding Alum Recipient

For many years, Disability Services has recognized a Ball State alum with a disability who has been successful in his or her post-Ball State life to receive the Outstanding Alum Award. Several years ago, we renamed this award the Richard Harris Outstanding Alum Award in honor of the man who is most responsible for the good reputation that Ball State has in serving its students with disabilities. A few years ago, upon Richard’s request, we added Bruce Rose’s name to the award. Bruce was an alum who had a significant impact on access at Ball State.

Richard Harris presented the 2016 Harris-Rose Outstanding Alum award to Anne Plassman. Before giving the award, he talked about how these alumni awards go to people who are not only good examples but show students the great things a Ball State graduate can do. His first impression of Anne was “still values run deep. Just because someone is quiet
Laura J. Kraska Awards

This is the fourth year that Disability Services has presented the Laura J. Kraska awards. Laura received her Bachelor’s degree at Ball State in 1990 and her Master’s degree in 1993 in Information & Communication Sciences. Laura had low vision and benefited greatly by the services provided by Disability Services. In Laura’s memory, the Kraska family has endowed yearly scholarships to three students with visual impairments. Tom and Tim Kraska (Laura’s father and brother) traveled from Chicago to meet all of the recipients of the award. The students also received a nice plaque in addition to the scholarship for next year.

In selecting students to receive the Laura Kraska awards, we looked for students with visual impairments who have done well in the classroom and who have been active members of the Ball State community. Disability Services staff members and Carlos Taylor, adaptive technology specialist, formed the committee to select the students who received the awards.

Michael Cook is a junior Social Studies Education major from Wheatfield, IN. He is on the Executive Board for Alliance for Disability Awareness, as well as a secretary for the Diversity and Multicultural Committee of the Student Government Association. Michael also was a featured speaker at a Ball State TEDx presentation.

Keri Hymer is a sophomore Art major from Winchester, IN. She is involved in Campus Crusade. She also has participated in the Disability Awareness panel for Women’s Week. Keri was a previous recipient of the Bush Scholarship.

Keri was a previous recipient of the Bush Scholarship.

Kristin Wietecha is a junior studying Speech Language Pathology from Morgantown, IN. She is the Chapter Secretary for the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association and also a writer for News & Notes (the Honors College Newspaper). She is a member of Student Honors Council and National Society of Leadership and Success. Kristin also volunteers for Golden Living Center in Muncie, Rainbow’s END Optimist Club, and Lose the Training Wheels/iCan Ride. Kristin does all of this and maintains a 3.9 grade point average.

Laura J. Kraska Awards

does not mean that they do not have deep characteristics and values. Anne has that kind of personality that people are attracted to.” She was chosen for this award because, “she does so much advocacy for students with disabilities, not just supporting people with disabilities but giving that example of what persons with disabilities can achieve so that even those without disabilities get a really solid picture.”

Anne got her Bachelor’s degree in Education with an emphasis in Special Education and followed up with a Master’s degree in Special Education. Anne currently works in the Department of Special Education at Ball State as a Student Support Outreach Specialist. She has been an advisor, assistant to the department chair, outreach specialist, and more. She mentors, encourages, and supports others to become the very best. In accepting her award Anne said she “is deeply humbled.” She thanked her parents and her family for always supporting her through everything she has done.

Anne’s family has also been very involved in the disability community. In 2015, the Plassman family funded the addition of the Plassman Athletic Center to the Turnstone facility in Fort Wayne, one of the premier recreation centers in the country that caters to athletes with disabilities. Several of our Ball State students participate on a Power Soccer team that practices at the facility.
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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THIS PUBLICATION IS AVAILABLE IN ACCESSIBLE FORMAT ON OUR WEBSITE.

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