

# Students get 'kick-start' from scholarships

BY JOH HUBERT  
STAFF WRITER

Thanks to a \$10,000 donation from Akebono Corporation, five Farmington area students took a step closer to achieving their goals this week.

Winners of the \$2,000 Kick-Start Scholarships were honored May 12, during the Farmington Youth Assistance 2003 Youth Recognition Awards breakfast, held at Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills. Akebono also helped foot the bill for the event.

"When we first talked to Youth Assistance, I was impressed by the overwhelming information and knowledge of how many needs there are," said Akebono President and Chief Operating Officer Kevin Alder.

"As a company, we feel very strongly about the emphasis on education. It's our belief success is fueled by knowledge."

All five scholarship winners have plans for post-secondary education.

Kathleen Liparato, Holly Vedder and Elyse Hall currently attend Farmington Alternative Academy, Alaina Perry attends Farmington High and Shineka Chestnut is a Harrison High student.

All are active volunteers, as were the 43 other nominees for the scholarship awards.

Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell, who served as event chairperson, said nominees

racked up a total of 9,037 volunteer hours, the equivalent of five full-time employees and almost \$160,000 in wages, according to figures provided by Oakland County.

Dignitaries who attended praised students' efforts, which included everything from school fund-raising and service projects to cleaning

church buildings and teaching religious classes.

Many related quotes from famous Americans on the topic of volunteerism, including a thoughtful, committed citizen

can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Speaking on behalf of Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, Mayor Pro Tem Jon Grant said the youth being honored were changing the world "one project at a time."

Farmington School Board President Linda Enberg noted volunteering could become a life-long habit; her father, now in his 80s, still volunteers to build homes for Habitat for Humanity and bunk beds for women's shelters.

"You guys really get it," said State Sen. Gilda Jacobs. "And you get it at a very young age."

Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Martha Anderson noted,

"Unfortunately, we don't hear about these youngsters

as much as we should. I know there are more of you doing good things than bad things."

Among the cheerleaders and supporters attending were students' parents and teachers, and others who nominated students for the awards.

Ron Vedder said his daughter Holly's involvement in volunteering got started with school activities.

He said volunteering is a perpetual part of his life and was proud to see his daughter follow in those footsteps.

Holly's first volunteer event was a hike-a-thon to help fund diabetes research.

"I liked mountain biking, and I figured if I'm going to bike anyway, I might as well do it for a cause," said the senior, who has since participated in the Goodfellow's Canned Food Drive,



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESCHE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nominees are (in alphabetical order) Ashley Amye, Richard Berger-Munson, Nicole Boychuk, Dominique Boyd, Rachel Button, John Callahan, Zina Dalmi, Mark Deeds, Sarah Eklov, Laura Evangelista, Emilie Feiten, Peter Fenton, Angela Hanks, Eleanor Harding, Breana Hare, Keyontay Humphries, Abbigayle Hunter, Zehra Imam, Lindsay Joy, Sabrina Keesee, Karen Kudelko, Audra Leckman, Scott Lachman, Michael Landsberg, Ashley Levine, Megan Loch, Andrew MacMillan, Ebony McEldred, Christina Mouawad, Kathleen Muccino, Ricky Muldrew, Danielle Nickels, Silvani Patel, Ben Peven, Kellie Phellier, Kelly Refalo, Bryan Robbins, Lauren Sundquist, John Szymuski, Stephanie Tawa, James Thrubis, James Vider, and Heather Young.

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Students Operating Schools and raking leaves for senior citizens.

"Once you start helping, you can't stop," she added.

Alaina Perry, a member of Farmington High's C.A.R.E. program, has been a volunteer since her freshman year.



Elyse Hall, Alaina Perry, Shineka Chestnut and Holly Vedder are four of the five students who received scholarship awards from Tsuyoshi Kashiwagi and Kevin Alder of Akebono Corporation.

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Alaina Perry, a member of Farmington High's C.A.R.E. program, has been a volunteer since her freshman year.

She got into volunteering by working with her mother at their church.

"I just love kids. I like being with them and knowing I'm helping them," she said.

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## RECIPIENTS

### Kathleen Liparato

Kathleen has gained tremendous strength and character as a young person, overcoming many obstacles in life with great grace and poise. She is a very determined individual who attributes her resolve to her faith and family. She'll continue her education at David Presley School of Cosmetology and hopes to own a salon.

### Alaina Perry

Creative, energetic, compassionate and hard-working, Alaina has dedicated many hours to her school and community. She is a cheerleader, gymnast, member of Farmington High's C.A.R.E. program and participated in student council her freshman year. She plans to study business at Eastern Michigan University with the goal of opening a day care or self-help business.

### Holly Vedder

Holly values life experiences and the importance of a good education. She has participated in many school projects and is compassionate about making a difference in the lives of others. She aspires toward becoming a great teacher and will pursue her educational goals at Oakland Community College and Eastern Michigan University.

### Shineka Chestnut

A future business student, Shineka will use her scholarship to attend Texas Southern University and one day pursue a career in law. She has volunteered at food drives and with her church, helping to watch and minister to children.

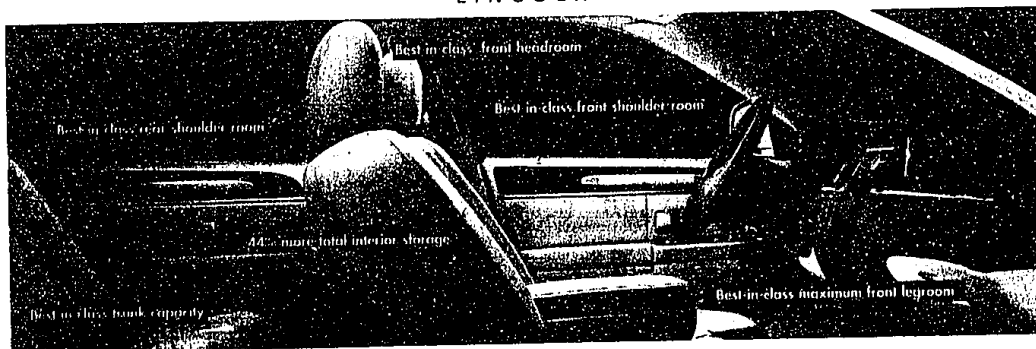
### Elyse Hall

Elyse has never shied away from anything difficult, including her goal of pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology and eventually a master's degree in social work.

Her career goal is to work with troubled teens. In school, she has studied Shakespeare, geometry, global studies, business law and psychology, all while working full-time. She has also contributed time and energy to many volunteer projects, including the Goodfellow's Christmas toy drive.

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