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Article from the **Pantagraph** (Bloomington, IL)

'Every penny helps'

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Caption: Lovie McClom, left, Candace Hopgood, center, and Michael Gaston-Bell, talk after being awarded **scholarships** at the 2006 Bloomington-Normal Joint **Scholarship** Celebration Saturday afternoon at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Bloomington. Sharon Francis takes a group photograph of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority members and **scholarship** recipients at the 2006 Bloomington-Normal Joint **Scholarship** Celebration on Saturday afternoon at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Bloomington.

BLOOMINGTON - Paying for college got a little easier Saturday for 14 Twin City high school graduates.

"Every penny helps when it comes to college expenses," said Lauren Murphy, a recent Normal Community High School graduate. "I'm very thankful (for the **scholarships**). College is so expensive these days."

This was the fourth year for the Mentoring and Providing **Scholarships** program.

Ten local organizations distributed \$20,000 worth of **scholarships** to 14 students, said **Tony Jones**, the program's co-founder.

"We want to help students to be successful in college and make sure that financial resources are not a barrier to their education," he said before the event at Bloomington's Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church.

Larry Scott, a systems manager for Bloomington-based State Farm Insurance Cos., spoke to the group and stressed the importance of education and achieving goals. He was the youngest of six boys raised by his grandmother on a farm in rural Texas.

"My grandmother had a fifth-grade education. She didn't know anything about molecular biology or quantum physics," he said. "But she knew in order for me to successful, she would need to help provide me with an education."

Scott said goals become worthless if they are simply talked about.

"You can have all the goals and strategies in the world, but if you don't act on them, they mean nothing," he said.

Murphy, of Normal, is planning to attend the University of Illinois in the fall and study political science. "I might go to law school, or maybe be a senator or an elected government official," she said.

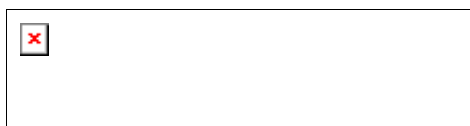
Cherelle Gay, a Bloomington High School graduate, is headed for Eastern Illinois University to become a high school teacher.

"I want to study social science or political science," she said. "Eventually I want to teach at inner city schools."

Besides Murphy and Gay, the following students received **scholarships**: Vanessa Ebo; Lovie McClom; Jonathan Moore; Raymon Ragins; Adebowale Adeniyi; Candace Hopgood; Matthew Wright; Renna Berry; Ray Lee; Brittane Barbee; Chelsea Smith; and Michael Gaston-Bell.

Organizations that presented **scholarships** were: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; Bloomington/Normal Grambling Alumni Association; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; Mentoring and Providing **Scholarships** Program; NAACP Bloomington/Normal Branch; 100 Black Men of Central Illinois; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity; and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

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