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**ST. DAVID'S FOUNDATION TO GRANT  
HEALTH CARE SCHOLARSHIPS AUGUST 11TH**

**AUSTIN** – St. David's Foundation announced today that 27 scholarships will be awarded for 2009 to graduating high school seniors in the Central Texas area. Formal presentation of the scholarships will take place on August 11 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin.

The St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Fund provides students with \$4,000 per year for four years, to be used for tuition at Texas universities and colleges. Applicants must be graduating seniors within the independent school districts of Travis, Williamson, or Hays counties, and pursuing healthcare-related careers.

As a part of the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship program, a mentor from St. David's HealthCare will be paired with each scholarship recipient, providing the students with the opportunity to interact directly with professionals in their chosen career.

One of those mentors is Dr. Steve Berkowitz, Chief Medical Officer for St. David's HealthCare, who said, "We have the opportunity to work with really bright, motivated students and get them started in their professions. It will be interesting to watch how they progress as their dreams become reality."

"We are pleased to provide each of these deserving students with financial support. Our entire community will benefit from the health care excellence these young students will provide in coming years, and we are glad to invest in their promising future," said Earl Maxwell, chief executive officer of the Foundation.

As part of the scholarship effort, St. David's Foundation will conduct a day-long college preparatory workshop for all 27 recipients of this year's scholarships. The day will culminate in a special presentation banquet attended by the scholarship recipients and their families.

**THE ST. DAVID'S NEAL KOCUREK SCHOLARSHIP FUND:**

The St. David's Foundation established the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship fund in 2004 to honor its late president and CEO, W. Neal Kocurek, Ph.D. (1936-2004). Since its inception, there have been a total of 71 Neal Kocurek Scholars. The scholarship program seeks students who embody Dr. Kocurek's commitment to leadership and community service in Central Texas.

Funds for the scholarships are raised annually from Toast of the Town, a series of parties held each spring, now in its 26th year. In 2009 over \$300,000 was raised for the scholarship fund.

## ST. DAVID'S FOUNDATION:

*The vision of St. David's Foundation is to keep the promise of a better life by improving health and health care for all Central Texans. The Foundation's mission is to work with commitment, integrity, and respect to achieve our vision in our hospitals, programs, and community partnerships. The 2009 budget for the Foundation is \$21 million, which includes grants to mental health agencies, agencies serving the elderly, ill and homeless, and many of the area's private safety net clinics, and the St. David's Dental Program. For more information on St. David's Foundation, visit [www.stdavidsfoundation.org](http://www.stdavidsfoundation.org).*

## RECIPIENT STORIES

Below please find biographical background information about a few of the 2009 St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholars. Many of this year's recipients have faced medical challenges in their lives that have inspired them to pursue a medical career that will allow them to help others.

**MARIA** has suffered from severe kidney problems since the eighth grade and has endured years of chemotherapy treatments. Maria plans to become a medical doctor and study nephrology, or the study of the function and diseases of the kidney.

Her parents, both immigrants, often faced economic hardships in paying for Maria's medical bills and raising two children. They are extremely proud that their daughter has excelled both in and out of the classroom, graduating second in a class of 512 students. Maria has received numerous awards including the United States Achievement Academy (USAA) National English Merit Award, USAA International Foreign Language Award and the USAA Leadership and Service award. Maria is a first-generation college student and will attend the University of Texas at Austin in the fall as a pre-med major.

**LAUREN**'s family has faced many emotional, financial and medical challenges since her brother was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Lauren says that these challenges have molded her into the person she is today and inspired her to pursue a career in medicine. She will attend Texas A&M University in the fall as a pre-med major, with the goal of becoming a pediatric neurologist.

Because Lauren has seen the challenges of dealing with a disability, she has served as a mentor to children with disabilities since the eighth grade. In high school, she began mentoring to a self-contained special needs class.

**PAUL** will attend the University of Texas at Austin in the fall and plans to major in Biomedical Engineering. His family has faced financial adversity over the past few years due to medical costs for Paul's sister, who was diagnosed with epilepsy at an early age. Over the years Paul has worked hard to save for college, working two jobs in the summer and one during the school year.

An extraordinary leader, Paul is active in school and his community. He volunteers at St. David's Round Rock Medical Center and was president of the National Honor Society. Paul also helped organize several blood drives and school health fairs. His parents are very proud of his determination to overcome and make the best out of difficult circumstances.

**RYAN** spent his childhood in Taiwan before coming to the US. Severe dental problems plagued Ryan throughout his youth, leading him to aspire to become a dentist and help other children in need of dental attention. He came to America at the age of 11 and did not speak any English. Since then, Ryan has excelled throughout high school, graduating fourth out of 601 students. He will attend the University of Texas this fall as a pre-dental major.

Ryan has spent his recent summers traveling back to Taiwan, where he interned at a local dental clinic. During the school year, he was a member of the National Honor Society Club, French National Honor Society Club and the Asian Student Organization.