FOCUS ON WOMEN AWARDS HONOR FOUR OUTSTANDING ACM STUDENTS

Allegany College of Maryland honored four outstanding students recently at its 16th annual Focus on Women Awards ceremony, where ACM Board of Trustees members were special guests.

The honorees are traditional-age and non-traditional students who have brought life experience and accomplishment to the college and have gone above and beyond in their education and in the community.

The Focus on Women Award was created to honor female students who have demonstrated leadership skills through volunteerism and community involvement as well as personal and academic achievement.

The four award recipients are: Dana Green of Grantsville; Roberta Pence of Cumberland; Natalya Turner of Cumberland; and Brandi Whipkey of Somerset, Pa.

The following biographical sketches were drawn from information furnished by the faculty and staff members who nominated them and read aloud at the ceremony:

Dana Green has demonstrated leadership in the community as well as the classroom. A nursing major at ACM’s Garrett Center, she is a certified nursing assistant and paramedic who has served the Northern Garrett County Rescue Squad for over 20 years, including four years as president. Working full-time in a hospital emergency room, where she was commended for her professionalism and compassion, Green took classes for admission to ACM’s registered nursing program. She’s become a role model to fellow students by her extra efforts, which include volunteering for projects, staying after class to improve her clinical skills and initiating study groups to aid and encourage others. Throughout her studies, Green has continued to volunteer with the rescue squad.

Roberta Pence is commended for high academic achievement in the human service associate program and leadership roles on campus and in the community. All the while, she’s remained highly involved with her children and grandchildren and revealed courage and commitment to face life’s challenges. Pence has been a major force in forging a community partnership between the Human Service Club and a Cumberland Masonic lodge to implement the Masonic Child Identification, or CHIP, program. Over 200 children have been served through child ID events throughout Allegany County. Pence has served the college at large as president of the Student Government Association for the past two years. She was the student representative on the ACM team that searched for a new president. Her enthusiasm for the task and her advocacy of students is credited with enhancing the process, including by encouraging fellow students to take part in college-wide forums with the candidates.

Natalya Turner has shown leadership and volunteerism to the college and community while pursuing multiple majors and maintaining a high academic average – all in a language that is not native to her. A business administration, economics and accounting major, she may continue her studies to include political science. Translating from English to her native Russian adds to the effort. Turner is active in two college organizations, the Phi Theta Kappa honor society and Phi Beta Lambda, a business and leadership group. In the latter, she led a committee that sent Christmas cards to U.S. military members, prepared food baskets for the Union Rescue Mission at Christmas and participated in PBL’s recent state leadership conference. As Phi Theta Kappa vice president, she helped stage a regional conference on campus last fall. As chapter president this semester, she has worked to reinvigorate the organization by making it more active.
Brandi Whipkey has successfully juggled family, career and community involvement with a desire to obtain a college degree and maintain high academic standards to include Phi Theta Kappa honors. A single mother for many years, Whipkey worked part-time in a bank and part-time in other jobs before securing full-time work with the former. A member of the bank’s auditing department, she is earning a business management degree at ACM’s Somerset County Campus for career advancement. A classroom leader with high expectations, faculty and staff selected her for Leadership Somerset County, a developmental program of the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce. Her class is working with Community Action Partnership to restore a Confluence playground. Married and the mother of two children, she volunteers in her church and participates in youth activities.

The Focus on Women awards were presented at an event attended by members of the college community as well as ACM’s Board of Trustees. The ceremony was led by Joanna DuVall, administrative assistant to the vice president of student and legal affairs.