



Lincoln Learning Solutions Opens Doors with Scholarships

By Nicole Costlow

Lincoln Learning Solutions is proud to recognize Ben Kurtyka, JoAnne Sharpless, Christopher Grossi, recipients of our Penn State Beaver Lincoln Learning Solutions Open Doors Scholarship.

Kurtyka is a graduate of New Brighton High School. Currently a sophomore at Penn State Beaver, he is majoring in cybersecurity.

"I've always been interested in technology, specifically the Internet," Kurtyka said. "I grew up in the country with dial-up Internet, and I always found it to be intriguing."

After graduation, Kurtyka said he plans to stay in the Pittsburgh area and hopes to work in cybersecurity for a large company such as PNC Bank or UPMC Pittsburgh.

Outside of class, Kurtyka participates in Club Potential, a group of students who brainstorm ways to make campus life better and bring students from diverse backgrounds together to foster creativity. He's planning to submit an idea to allow students to bring a friend to the campus workout facilities.

"Many students don't utilize the facilities because they like to work out with friends who aren't Penn State Beaver students," he explained.

He also participates in Mock Trial, an activity that gives students a chance to improve their communications and presentation skills by playing the roles of lawyers, judges, and witnesses in staged legal trials.

Kurtyka plans to use his scholarship funds to help with the cost of tuition. As a student paying for college independently, he said the scholarship will allow him to spend less time working and more time focused on his studies.

"It lessens the burden on me and my family," he said, "and I'm extremely grateful for this scholarship."

Daniel Pinchot, senior director of enrollment management for Southwestern Pennsylvania at Penn State Beaver, said he recognizes the challenges that many students and their families face when it comes to paying college tuition.

"Students and their families have to make sacrifices to be here," Pinchot said.

"Sometimes, those are not enough. It's not enough to bring students to Penn State. We want them to get their degree. We want them to be successful."

To create the scholarship, Lincoln Learning Solutions granted Penn State Beaver a gift of \$50,000, payable over a five-year span. The university matched the gift, creating scholarship opportunities to support students in STEM programs at Penn State Beaver and those students' hard work and academic success.

"Many students are struggling to finish," said Jen Cushman, chancellor of Penn State Beaver. "These scholarships really help with that."

Our second scholarship recipient, JoAnne Sharpless, is a graduate of Freedom Area High School. Currently a junior at Penn State Beaver, she is majoring in psychology and minoring in criminal justice. After college, Sharpless said she would like to use her degree either by practicing art therapy at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh or becoming a school counselor. She's also considering a career in corrections.

"Art therapy is a way for children to showcase their emotions," Sharpless explained. "It's a less invasive way of connecting with them."

Her father's career as an architect helped Sharpless develop her love for art.

"He was always drawing," Sharpless said. "Art has always been a way for me to express myself."

Sharpless said that she chose Penn State Beaver because of its small size, as being able to connect with her professors is important to her.

"I'm very thankful you chose me." Sharpless said about the Lincoln Learning Solutions scholarship.

Christopher Grossi, our third scholarship recipient, was unavailable for an interview.

The recipients were among more than 80 students who received scholarships this year because of the generous contributions of Penn State Beaver supporters, according to the university.

"Giving back to the community is a part of our core belief here at Lincoln Learning Solutions," Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Dr. Rachel Book, said. "We are especially passionate about helping students achieve their educational goals and wish Christopher, JoAnne, and Ben all the best as they pursue theirs."