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Southwest Wisconsin Money Smart Essay Contest Awards $5,000
Scholarship Program Promotes Financial Literacy, Supported by Financial Industry

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) and the Wisconsin Coalition on Student Debt (Coalition) awarded five Southwest Wisconsin graduating high school seniors with $1,000 Edvest, Wisconsin’s College Savings Plan, gift cards for their winning Money Smart Essay Contest submissions this spring.

Students from Dane, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, and Rock Counties had the opportunity to write an essay about how they plan to finance their college education for a chance to win one of five $1,000 Edvest gift cards. Members of the Coalition reviewed and scored 103 essay submissions based on criteria including research, identifying funding sources for college, and explaining how to manage student loan debt.

Throughout the month of May, award winners were notified and received special video recognition as well as their Edvest gift card via mail. A special congratulations to this year’s winners:

- Omunazia Hicks – Madison East High School
- Alyssa Holmes – Milton High School
- Brenna Krenke – LaFollette High School
- Leslie Leal-Maldonado – Jefferson High School
- Monique Thole – Waunakee High School

“Through their winning essay submissions, these students have shown us they have developed plans to pay for college and manage potential student loan debt,” said DFI Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld. “We applaud these deserving students for all they have done, and we encourage them to continue building their financial literacy skills as they continue their education.”

The Money Smart Essay Contest was sponsored by the Coalition, DFI, Edvest, Marine Credit Union Foundation, Summit Credit Union, Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) Region 6, and Wisconsin JumpStart Coalition.

Organizations participating in the Wisconsin Coalition on Student Debt include: Ascendium Education; Boys & Girls Club; Fair Opportunity Project; GreenPath Financial Wellness; Herzing University; Madison Metropolitan School District; Medical College of Wisconsin; Navient; Summit Credit Union; University of Wisconsin; Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin; UW Credit Union; Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC); Western Technical College; Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; Wisconsin Bankers Foundation; Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI); and Wisconsin Manufactures and Commerce.

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