

Scholarship helps struggling students go to college

By Becky Orr

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CHEYENNE – Thirteen students in Wyoming have earned scholarships from a foundation that helps young people who struggle in school.

Established in March, the Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation helps young people further their education.

The foundation helps them with money to go on to the University of Wyoming, community colleges or vocational schools in Wyoming.

Susan Thomas, wife of the late U.S. Sen. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo., visited Cheyenne on Tuesday. She stopped by some schools and updated people about the foundation's work.

The foundation was established in memory of the sen-

For more information

To find out more about the Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation, log onto the Web site at www.Thomas-Foundation.com, e-mail CraigandSusanThomasFoundation@Bresnan.net or call 634-8195.

ator, who died June 4, 2007, of complications from leukemia. Her husband always believed in young people, she said. She taught school for 36 years, always with at-risk students.

"I wanted to continue his legacy, and I thought what better way. This makes sense to me," she added. "I think Craig would be very proud of what we're doing."

The foundation has given out 13 scholarships all over

the state. Scholarship students are in every community college in Wyoming.

One student attends Laramie County Community College, and another lives in Cheyenne.

Although the scholarship focus is on young people, there is no age limit.

One of the first winners was a single mother of four who needed a few hours of class to finish her cosmetology school. She didn't have the money and the foundation helped her. The woman took her state boards and now works in the career.

The focus of the scholarship work is to help disadvantaged or at-risk young people succeed.

"There are those who apply who have lived in cars and are homeless," she said. "There are hundreds of kids

out there who need help," she said.

These are students who don't qualify for the state's Hathaway Scholarship program, for example, but who have ability and intelligence.

Students must use their scholarships in Wyoming.

The foundation offers three areas of help:

- Scholarships at \$1,250 each, which are offered every semester. Students have until Nov. 15 to meet the next deadline.

- Leadership awards to adults who go above and beyond to help at-risk youth. The award includes a \$2,500 cash prize. Therapist Craig Falkman of Gillette is the first person to receive the award.

- Grants to groups that champion at-risk kids. So far, grants have been

awarded to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Wyoming and the National Guard Youth Challenge Program. There is a third grant that has not been

awarded yet. The foundation started with some leftover campaign seed money. Thomas said she visits leaders of businesses and companies to raise money.