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SCCF Announces 2019 Lilly Endowment Community Scholar

Angola, IN – An Angola High School senior has been named as the Steuben County 2019 Lilly Endowment Community Scholar. Mason Gaerte will receive a four-year, full-tuition scholarship to an accredited public or private nonprofit college or university in Indiana, along with an annual \$900 stipend for books and required equipment.

Lilly scholarships were first awarded in 1998, and over 4,400 scholarships have been awarded statewide, not including 143 that will be awarded during this round.

Gaerte, son of Duane and Amy Gaerte of Angola, plans to study Biology at Butler University. He is the senior class president, plays the trombone for the Marching Hornets at Angola high school, and is part of his church's worship team.

A surprise announcement was given to Mason at Angola High School where his family, friends, school and high school administrators, as well as members from the Steuben County Community Foundation were present.

"It's the culmination of a lot of years of hard work, and it's also a time to reflect on the journey and all that's gotten me here, not just the destination," shared Mason at the announcement.

The selection process for the Lilly scholarship is comprised of four different parts evaluated by a volunteer committee. The process is pre-approved by the Independent Colleges of Indiana prior to the applications becoming available. The committee reviewed and scored the 20 applications received (with names and all personal information omitted) and selected six finalists based on academic and extra-curricular achievements in Steuben County. These six students then participated in an impromptu essay, portfolio presentation and formal interview. The scores from these four components were added together to nominate a recipient and two alternates.

The nominated candidates are then recommended to the Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI) selection committee who audits the entire process and selects the scholarship recipient. The process of selection was followed as originally approved.

“Once again, there was an outstanding group of applicants from Steuben County. Our committee of volunteers did a fantastic job with the selection process and we can’t thank them enough for their dedication,” says SCCF Program Officer Jacqui Gentile. “We also would like to congratulate the other five finalists: Jaden Cardoso, Annie Delgadillo, Alyssa Hernandez, Bailey Pelliccia and Abigail Stoy, who will each receive a \$1,000 Circle of Friends scholarship from the Steuben County Community Foundation.”

ICI is a nonprofit corporation that represents 30 regionally accredited degree granting, nonprofit, private colleges and universities in the state. The scholarships are the result of a statewide Lilly Endowment initiative whose primary purposes are 1) to help raise the level of educational attainment in Indiana; 2) to increase awareness of the beneficial roles Indiana community foundations can play in their communities; and 3) to encourage and support the efforts of current and past Lilly Endowment Community Scholars to engage with each other and with Indiana business, governmental, educational, nonprofit and civic leaders to improve the quality of life in Indiana generally and in local communities throughout the state. The Lilly Endowment has provided over \$372 million dollars for tuition and book stipends to date. There were 143 scholarships awarded statewide in 2018; the number awarded in each county is based on the number of fulltime residents in each county. Steuben County was offered one award for 2019.

The Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship is one of 50 scholarships available through the Steuben County Community Foundation. Application materials for other 2019 community foundation scholarships are available on the foundation’s website: steubenfoundation.org.

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Through philanthropic services, strategic investments and community leadership, Steuben County Community Foundation helps people support the causes they care about, now and for generations to come. The Steuben County Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization with assets totaling more than \$27 million. Our vision: Serving as a community leader and improving the quality of life by assessing, supporting and coordinating philanthropic giving and endowment building. Our mission: Connecting people who care with needs that matter to our community. For more information on the Foundation, visit its website at www.steubenfoundation.org.