



# NEWS

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By Tracy Wallace

## **J&J/RCI Caregivers Program announces Mattie J. T. Stepanek Intergenerational Caregiving Scholarship winners**

AMERICUS, Ga.—The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving (RCI) has announced the winners of the 2007 Mattie J. T. Stepanek Intergenerational Caregiving Scholarships. The scholarship fund is in its third year as a component of the Johnson & Johnson/Rosalynn Carter Institute Caregivers Program.

Before his death at age 13 in 2004, poet and peacemaker Mattie Stepanek provided inspiration to people of all cultures throughout the world. In July 2003, he served as honorary co-chair of the J&J/RCI Caregivers Program Intergenerational Caregiving expert panel, lending this quote to the proceedings: “If all generations of people freely and abundantly give care to others and to our world, we will have an eternal source of love and hope that fulfills the needs of all ages...for all future”.

“Mattie’s comments were very prophetic; the number of individuals in our society requiring personal assistance due to ill health, chronic conditions and disabilities is at an historic level and growing”, said Laura J. Bauer, director of the J&J/RCI Caregivers Program. “We need caring, compassionate and skilled individuals of all ages to help fill the ever-widening gap between those who need care and those who provide care. These scholarship winners plan to use their scholarship funds to help further their education and training, which is the cornerstone of providing quality care,” she added.

The scholarship winners, receiving \$2,000 awards, are:

- Aaron Weintraub, Christiansburg, VA – Aaron, currently working on his Ph.D. in Human Development at Virginia Tech, has served as an advocate and caregiver for people with vulnerabilities his entire life. Aaron sees working towards an age integrated society as his mandate. He plans to be not only a practitioner of

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intergenerational programming, but also a researcher in human development who will one day teach others at a research and teaching university.

- Katie Woo, Philadelphia, PA – Katie holds a Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania and currently works as a pediatric ER registered nurse at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Katie will begin work on her Master’s degree this fall, and wants to assist the nursing shortage by teaching in a clinical setting. She hopes to inspire nursing school students to become compassionate and intelligent caregivers who can advocate for their patients. Katie also has the goal of participating in medical missions in the U.S. and abroad.
- Rose Trospen, Jonesboro, AR – Rose is currently a Family Care Specialist with the East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging. Her work experience, combined with her personal experience as a caregiver for her mother, who died of leukemia, inspired Rose to seek out a course in grief counseling. She now wants to help address the shortage of professionals qualified in this area by attending other courses which are necessary to complete her certification as a grief counselor. She hopes to offer other caregivers an outlet to express their grief and hope during their personal grief journeys.
- Christina Graham, Athens, GA – Christina currently attends the Medical College of Georgia’s School of Nursing. Through her numerous volunteer activities in the U.S. and other countries, she has experience working with a wide range of people of different ages and backgrounds. She believes that the medical field should be about improving the quality of life for all people in as many ways as possible. By becoming a nurse, she wants to spend her life making a difference in the lives of others.

“It is an honor to be involved in this wonderful endeavor,” said Jeni Stepanek, Mattie’s mother and chair of the scholarship selection committee. “Mattie believed that how we want to be remembered is how we should choose to think and speak and do and live each day. I am certain that these four individuals will be known and remembered for the difference they make through their compassion and caring,” Other committee members are Nancy Hunt, president of the We Are Family Foundation in New York City, and Kelly Ellison, senior communications and training executive with Camp Fire USA in Kansas City, MO. Both Nancy and Kelly worked with Mattie in the past on various projects relating to his concern for others and our world.

The mission of the J&J/RCI Caregivers Program is to enhance the quality of life, quality of care, knowledge and understanding of family caregivers. The RCI and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) formed a partnership in 2001 to develop a signature program in caregiving. This partnership builds on the foundational work in caregiving accomplished by the RCI

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during the last 20 years and builds on the credo of Johnson & Johnson to be “responsible to the communities in which we live and work” and “encourage...better health and education.”

The RCI was established in 1987 on the campus of Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) in Americus, Georgia. The RCI was formed in honor of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, an alumna of GSW, to enhance her long-standing commitments to human development and mental health. RCI works to establish local, state and national partnerships committed to building more effective long-term care systems and providing greater recognition and support for America's unsung heroes - the millions of caregivers, both family and professional, who provide us all with models of selfless service and hope for the future.

Johnson & Johnson, through its operating companies, is the world's most comprehensive and broadly based manufacturer of health care products, as well as a provider of related services, for the consumer, pharmaceutical and medical devices and diagnostics markets. The more than 200 Johnson & Johnson operating companies employ approximately 115,000 men and women in 57 countries and sell products throughout the world. The company is headquartered in New Brunswick, N.J.

**REPORTERS/EDITORS:**

For more information on the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving (RCI) or its programs, call (229) 928-1234 or go online: [www.rosalynncarter.org](http://www.rosalynncarter.org).

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