

PINNACLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2011 SCHOLARS

The Pinnacle Foundation has today announced the recipients of its 2011 scholarships. In its second round since The Pinnacle Foundation was established, nine scholarships to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (GLBTIQ) scholars were awarded.

“It is truly wonderful to see so many aspiring young GLBTIQ scholars studying in institutions across Australia and daring to be great,” said The Pinnacle Foundation co-founder, Sean Linkson.

“It’s also very satisfying to see our community financially supporting the scholarships and being their mentors.”

The Pinnacle Foundation 2011 scholars are:

- **Neville Fields**, 23, from Adelaide, SA, studying Medicine at Flinders University
- **Michelle Slattery**, 23, from Melbourne, VIC, studying Social Science at Swinburne University of Technology
- **Jake Quilligan**, 20, from Melbourne, VIC, studying Nursing and Paramedics at Monash University
- **Jayke Clayden**, 20, from Melbourne, VIC, studying International Studies at RMIT University
- **Isobel Connell**, 18, from Newcastle, NSW, studying Law at the University of Newcastle
- **Harriet Harding**, 22, from Sydney, NSW, studying Music Composition at Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- **Veronica Mason**, 22, from Sydney, NSW, studying Arts/Law at University of New South Wales
- **Kat Newman**, 20, from Perth, WA, completing a Diploma of Youth Work at TAFE at Polytechnic West
- **Suzie Day** from Perth, WA, pursuing a BA in Library and Information Management at Curtin University

The Foundation’s patron Hon Michael Kirby congratulated The Pinnacle Foundation and this year’s scholarship recipients.

“I start by congratulating the Foundation on this expansion of its scholarships in 2011. I give felicitations to those who have succeeded and a message of encouragement to those who will try again next year: each one of us, throughout life, must do what we can to advance the message of equal justice under law for all. The Pinnacle Foundation scholarships are one way to encourage the awardees to accept that idea early in life. And to keep it with them throughout their careers.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABOUT THE PINNACLE FOUNDATION

Established in 2008, The Pinnacle Foundation provides scholarships and mentoring to GLBTIQ youth who are marginalised or disadvantaged because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It was created by a group of friends who saw a big need in the GLBTIQ community that was not being met.

In 2010, The Pinnacle Foundation awarded two scholarships. In 2011, nine GLBTIQ scholars will benefit from The Pinnacle Foundation scholarships.

With scholars from all around Australia, co-founder Sean Linkson said The Pinnacle Foundation is now building momentum and is moving towards becoming a national organisation.

“Not only have we funded scholars living in four states, our Board now has representatives from Melbourne as well as Sydney,” Linkson said. “Our challenge this year is to attract more donors and mentors to our cause so that we can have an even bigger award of scholarships in 2012. Putting back into our community is what it is all about. We have been fortunate this year to match our scholars with a group of truly inspiring mentors, each an expert in the student’s field of study,” Linkson said.

ABOUT THE APPLICATIONS

- Over 30 expressions of interest were received which resulted in 12 applications and 9 applicants receiving funding
- Of the successful applicants 5 are from lesbians, 3 from gay men and 1 from an intersex person.
- Average age of successful applicants was 20.2 years
- 6 scholars experienced hostile or difficult family environments. All scholars were able to demonstrate that they had been disadvantaged
- Average funds sought was \$7000
- Average funds granted was \$4700
- Main purpose of grants: acquisition of computers, text books, uniforms, professional equipment, and tuition and union fees.

For more information on The Pinnacle Foundation, go to www.thepinnaclefoundation.org

Images and interviews are available.

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