

## **Fenton senior receives \$20,000 national scholarship**

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Perhaps no one explained the concept of a glass ceiling to Fenton High School senior Ashley Kendrick. Despite moving 12 times in the last year and experiencing financial hardships, she has never let her personal life conflict with her thirst for success. The National Honor Society student and varsity softball player discovered in December that she has the means to shatter through that ceiling, all because of her work ethic and academic success.

Ashley is one of 104 students in the nation that will receive the Horatio Alger Award, a \$20,000 scholarship awarded to outstanding students who have overcome great hardships. She has been accepted to Central Michigan University, where she has received another \$10,000 academic scholarship. She plans to be a physician's assistant.

"My family was evicted from half the homes we moved from," Ashley said. "This scholarship makes me realize that there is always something positive in life, no matter what is happening to you."

Ashley found out about the scholarship during her senior interview. Fenton High School Councilor Michelle Pietraszkiewicz encouraged her to apply, believing that Ashley had more than a viable chance to get the scholarship.

"The scholarship is for students who have overcome challenges and Ashley had definitely done that," said Pietraszkiewicz. "Ashley is now able to move away and get the full college experience at Central instead of going to a community college."

Ashley didn't know that she had won the award until she received a phone call from the Horatio Alger Foundation, informing her that she had to attend an award ceremony in Washington D.C. Leonardo DiCaprio, New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and Tom Selleck were just a few of the guest speakers at the event. Ashley said that she found relief interacting with students who have faced many of the same hardships she had.

"Being around similar students showed me that you can overcome obstacles if you try hard enough," Kendrick said. "I know what I want in life and what I don't want."

Ashley was involved in a multitude of activities such as the Youth Advisory Council and the Captain's Club. She said that it takes a lot of planning and help from her friends and family, to whom she is very grateful. "I just take it as it comes. I know that I can make it through anything."

Her future is already brighter than her past, and it will only continue to shine. After college, Ashley plans on moving to Florida and working in a bustling hospital.

"I have always enjoyed helping people," she said. "I don't think I can see myself sitting in a local office all day long."