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News Release

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Northern Maine Community College Raffle Changes Lives

Aroostook County - “Holy cow...I’m going back to school...and next week!” That was the stunned reaction of 25 year old Heather Copeland, a Mapleton native who was one of the lucky winners of the first-ever tuition raffle held by Northern Maine Community College’s Alumni and Friends Organization.

Friends of Heather’s family, Gisele and Danny MacDonald, had purchased one of the winning tickets drawn on August 19 and designated Heather as the recipient of the prize: free tuition for 12 credit hours in the fall semester and again for the spring semester.

Heather had taken classes at NMCC previously and originally hadn’t planning to return this fall due to the need to work during the busy season on her parents’ Christmas tree farm.

“But now that I have this opportunity, I’ll have to work less; but I feel an education is more important,” she explains. “Having this gift makes the financial load much, much smaller. I will be able to pay off what I owe and get the degree.”

Heather is pursuing a business degree with the hopes of expanding her home-crafting business.

The NMCC Alumni and Friends Organization raffle chose one winner from each of the College’s four academic departments: Nursing and Allied Health, Business, Trade and Technical, and Arts and Sciences.

Ashley Doucette of New Sweden has already completed all the courses necessary for a degree in Early Childhood Education. But she is back on the NMCC campus enrolled in the Health Information Technology program. She, too, was the recipient of a winning raffle ticket—this time bought by a stranger.

“We didn’t know anyone going to NMCC, so I asked my niece if she knew anyone,” according to Sandra Bouchard. “She said, ‘yes, my best friend, Ashley.’ But she may not have been going back right away due to finances. My husband Mark and I were happy to put her name in the drawing and so happy that she won!”

Ashley currently works part time was a day habilitation trainer at Northern Maine General and has a second job in a sandwich shop.

“I was shocked. I was struggling with money issues and this is such a help because of the extra expense this semester of health insurance costs. It’s pretty awesome that I get this opportunity.”

“It really takes some of the stress off. Not having to pay for most of this year’s expense means a lot,” according to Brad MacKenzie, a senior in the Diesel Hydraulics Technology program. Brad’s parents participated in the raffle and were ecstatic to find out their son had won.

“I was so happy...I mean, I never win anything big like this!” said Brad. “I’ll still have student loans for a couple of semesters, but this will make it so much easier.”

Brad, who is from Fairfield, says he chose NMCC because it’s the best program of its kind in the state. “I love it, it’s fantastic. While I’ll always have things to learn, I know I’ll be well prepared to find a job once I graduate. I just want to say ‘thank you’ to NM for making this raffle opportunity possible for students. I’ll never forget it!”

Unfortunately, because of life circumstances, the fourth winner was unable to take advantage of returning to college this year.

Over 53-hundred dollars was raised through the raffle; the proceeds will be retained by the Alumni and Friends Organization to fund activities which support the College.



Northern Maine Community College tuition raffle winners (seated from left) Heather Copeland, Bradley MacKenzie and Ashley Doucette. (Standing) Gisele and Danny MacDonald participated in the raffle and chose Copeland as the tuition recipient. Sandra and Mark Bouchard also had a winning ticket which was earmarked for Doucette.