

KKGU Outstanding Alum

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Amanda
King



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Dalton
Schoonover



Amanda King feels proud and honored to say that she is a Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP (KKGU) scholar. As a sophomore in high school she took college classes and soon discovered the high costs associated with tuition, books, and fees. She began searching for scholarships and came across KKGU. She met the eligibility criteria and was accepted into the program in 2003. With the assistance of KKGU, she was able to graduate high school and entered college as a junior, quite a feat. She graduated with honors from Harding University with a degree in exercise science. From there, she moved to Florida where in 2014 she received a Masters of Medical Science. Currently, King works at a hospital treating and providing care to patients.

The KKGU staff remembers King for being very active and highly motivated during her participation with KKGU. While obtaining her bachelor's degree, she was awarded the KKGU Scholarship, which provided her the opportunity to achieve her educational goals.

King says, "GEAR UP allowed me to focus on my studies instead of worrying about how I was going to pay for books and tuition each semester." She goes on to state, "I'm ready to be empowered, to be a leader, to be someone you're proud to introduce. Life is hard enough on a daily basis, don't let excuses tell you that you can't or aren't good enough to chase your dreams." She gives special thanks to GEAR UP and the people behind it.

Dalton Schoonover was involved with KKGU throughout his time at Pittsburg State University, where he obtained a degree in justice studies with an emphasis in criminal justice and a double minor in psychology and sociology in May 2014. He also has a master's degree in criminal justice from Wichita State which he completed in a year and a half. Currently, he works at the Southeast Kansas Regional Juvenile Detention Center as a detention supervisor and training officer. He is responsible for supervising the daily activities of all juveniles within the facility making sure that the clients follow rules, policies, and procedures.

KKGU honors Schoonover because he took advantage of the many resources and activities offered. Despite many hardships in high school, Dalton never gave up. He was awarded the KKGU scholarship throughout his undergraduate studies. That recognition allowed him to focus on academics and eased the financial burdens he experienced while a college student. "With my mother being a single-parent for the majority of my life, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP gave me an opportunity that many kids in my situation do not get," says Schoonover.

He hopes that students do their best to receive good grades in high school. Doing so, may lead to scholarship and other opportunities such as the ones he was afforded. Schoonover believes that students will succeed if they look at their struggles as simple challenges. "Make sure to always set realistic goals but have a plan for short-term goals and long-term goals," he advises.