

NEWS RELEASE

From the New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal

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Williamsville East High School Senior, Lindsey Burkard, Awarded NYSIR Scholarship

Long Island, New York -- The New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR) Executive Director, Joseph Goncalves, and the Board of Governors have announced that Lindsey Burkard, Williamsville East High School senior, has been awarded the \$5,000 Cristin Ann Bambino Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship, awarded to a college-bound special education student from a NYSIR-member school district, is given to reward the recipient for his or her effort in working through special challenges to complete high school and obtain acceptance to a college or university.

Miss Burkard, who suffered a traumatic brain injury as a result of a car accident when she was five years old, underwent physical and occupational therapy for years to learn how to walk and manage daily tasks, and speech classes, first to learn how to talk again, and then to re-learn how to process and comprehend the meaning of words correctly. She also has undergone extensive laser surgery to smooth scarring on her face.

Despite these challenges, Ms. Burkard has exhibited great leadership skills and evidenced an exemplary positive attitude, leading to her recent induction into her school's chapter of the National Honor Society. She has received a Girl Scouts of America Silver Award, played Amherst Girls Softball for eight years, and attended Academy of Theatre Arts for six years. She also has been an active member of her church.

On working hard to overcome so many obstacles, Ms. Burkard said, "It was all worth it because even though I still have some learning disabilities and scars on my face, I am able to walk and talk, and am learning how to live independently. I want to be a role model for other young people who have suffered a brain injury or have a learning disability. My message to them

would be, ‘You can never get down on yourself if you can’t do something right away. It might take time for you to learn something, but don’t give up.’”

Miss Burkard accepted her award at the NYSIR Annual Meeting in Tarrytown, New York on May 20th, accompanied by her parents, her sister Paige, and the teacher she credits with providing her with so much help and support, Meg McDonald. In presenting the award, NYSIR’s Director of Risk Management, Robert Bambino, father of the late Cristin Ann Bambino, said there were numerous highly qualified applicants for the scholarship, but that Miss Burkard’s efforts to overcome the challenges she has faced were enormous and outstanding, and that she served as a role model for countless students to not give in to their own disabilities. She will attend Hilbert College this fall, with plans to major in Human Services.

Since its licensure by the New York State Insurance Department in 1989, NYSIR has become the largest writer of property and casualty insurance coverage for New York public schools across the state. The Cristin Ann Bambino Scholarship has been awarded since 2007. Ms. Burkard was the grand scholarship winner, and this year there were five regional winners of additional scholarships awarded to other students who have overcome challenges to succeed.

PHOTO CAPTION: Williamsville East High School Senior, Lindsey Burkard, who earned the New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal’s Cristin Ann Bambino Grand Scholarship Award, seated at the left, with, standing from the left, NYSIR Executive Director, Joe Goncalves; her teacher, Meg McDonald; Mark Betz, President, NYSIR Board of Governors; her parents, Maggie and Ronald Burkard; NYSIR’s Director of Risk Management, Robert Bambino; and seated, her sister, Paige.

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