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KOD scholarship award winners promote cultural diversity, unity

By **Katie Land**, news editor

Three outstanding undergraduate Oakland University students have received the prestigious Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Awards for their contributions and promotion of interracial understanding and tolerance.

The 18th annual awards celebration presented the scholarships to English major Chelsea Grimmer, psychology major Juquatta Brewer, and communications major Melissa DeGrandis.

All three students have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and have shown themselves to be exceptional students and dedicated citizens of the community.

Grimmer is a member of the OU Honors College, Alpha Lambda Delta and two college ministries – QuarterLife and Inter-Varsity. She has served as a cultural ambassador in mission trips to Venezuela, Germany and Amsterdam, and regularly volunteers at home through a variety of organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the Greening of Detroit, Helping Hands Food Pantry and a project that hosts barbeques for the homeless in Detroit's Cass Corridor.

As a resident assistant, Brewer addresses student concerns and helps educate students about multicultural understanding. With a focus on women's and gender studies, she co-founded the student organization Encouraging Ladies by Inspiring Them to be Empowered, or E.L.I.T.E. Brewer is an active member of The Honor's College and was Oakland's 2009 representative to the Association of College and University Housing Officers' STARS College in Maryland.

Strong beliefs in cultural understanding inspired DeGrandis to create a permanent mural on Oakland's campus to promote diversity, after vandals spray painted racial slurs on campus sidewalks. A senior resident assistant, peer mentor, and Orientation Group Leader, she also volunteers on the Academic Conduct Committee and as a Jump Start Leader.

A steady increase in corporate contributions has made it possible to increase the initial level of awards from two \$1,000 scholarships in 1993 to several \$5,000 scholarships. More than fifty students from a wide variety of academic majors have been awarded scholarships since its inception.

For more information about the Keeper of the Dream event, please call the Center for Multicultural Initiatives at (248) 370-4404 or visit oakland.edu/kod.

SUMMARY

Chelsea Grimmer, Juquatta Brewer and Melissa DeGrandis earned the Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Awards for promoting cultural unity.

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