

## Firsich named Lilly Scholar

### Bryce Mayer

When Molly A. **Firsich** received a telephone call informing her she had been chosen as the Jennings County Community Foundation Lilly Endowment Scholar for 2012, she was just a bit skeptical at first. The call came on April 1 and she initially thought it might have been an April Fool's joke.

It was no joke, Ruth Adrian of the Foundation staff assured **Firsich**.

"I was greatly relieved to learn the call was not an April Fool's joke," **Firsich** said later.

The daughter of Todd and Jeanette **Firsich** of North Vernon, Molly will receive full tuition for four years to the Indiana college of her choice along with a \$900 yearly stipend for required books and equipment.

The scholarship program is made possible through the Lilly Endowment, which debuted the scholarship in 1998. **Firsich** joins a select group of 31 high school graduates from Jennings County also named as Lilly Endowment Scholars.

Firsich, a Jennings County High School senior, has been active in the Student Council, National Honor Society, Spanish Club, Peer Resources for Our Students and Peers Educating Peers.

She also has been involved in community and volunteer service, including as a summer volunteer at the Schneck Medical Center in Seymour, a Jennings County United Way Day of Caring volunteer, a Community Foundation gala volunteer server, a "Living Way of the Cross" participant, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Jennings County fund raiser participant and a Spanish Saturday Classics volunteer teacher.

"Words cannot put into perspective how I felt when I heard the news," **Firsich** said. "I am beyond grateful to be the one chosen for this scholarship."

Firsich plans to attend Ball State University in Muncie and major in nursing.

Community Scholar runner-up Katlynn Dickerson will receive a scholarship award of \$1,000. She is the daughter of Stephen and Laurinda Dickerson of North Vernon. She plans to attend either Trine University or the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and major in chemical engineering.

Twenty-six students competed for the prestigious scholarships this year. The selection process is done using a blind shield so applicants' identities remain unknown and a point system for anonymous evaluation of each applicant.

The criteria is based on academic performance, leadership and school activities, community involvement and volunteer service, employment, short essay, special circumstances and the interview.

Once the winner(s) are chosen locally, the Independent Colleges of Indiana certify the results.

The scholarships are the result of a state Lilly Endowment initiative to help Hoosier students attain higher education. Indiana ranks among the lowest states in the percentage of residents over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree. This year 142 scholarships were awarded statewide.

For more information, contact the Jennings County Community Foundation at 346-5553 or go to [jenningsfoundation.net](http://jenningsfoundation.net) on the Internet.



Molly A. Firsich