

Scholarships memorialize slain soldier

An article in Friday's Anne Arundel edition incorrectly reported the status of Gina Barnhurst of Severna Park, the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq. She did not remarry. The Sun regrets the error.

In the sleepless nights after his son's death in Iraq in October, Eric F. Herzberg spent his time sending e-mails to people who had signed an online condolence book.

One note in particular caught his attention. It was from the mother of Justin Carman, a Marine who served alongside Herzberg's son, 20-year-old Lance Cpl. Eric W. Herzberg of Severna Park. Faith Carman offered her sympathy and something else: a videotape of the two young men at Camp Lejeune, N.C., six days before they deployed to Iraq.

The online posting set off an exchange of e-mails that has led to the creation of two scholarships to benefit students in Maryland and Florida.

Graduating seniors from Severna Park High School, Cpl. Herzberg's alma mater, will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 over two years to attend a university, college or vocational school. In Carman's hometown in Hillsborough County, Fla., students will have the opportunity to receive the same amount.

The scholarships are a tribute to a son who followed in his father's military footsteps. The elder Herzberg was a graduate of West Point and served as an Army officer for five years.

"Usually it's the older generation that leaves a legacy for the younger generation to step into," said Herzberg, who lives in Laurel. "I made a commitment to him when I said goodbye that I would spend my life living up to the legacy he started."

Neither scholarship fund, however, has the support of Cpl. Herzberg's mother, Gina Barnhurst.

Barnhurst, who is remarried and lives in Severna Park, said her son would have wanted donations in his name to go toward a fund that benefits military families.

"We feel the money would be better spent for people who are struggling over there [Iraq] and might be struggling in the future," said Barnhurst.

She prefers that donations be sent to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, a New-York-based nonprofit that helps disabled veterans and their families.

The younger Herzberg enlisted in the Marines three months after he graduated from Severna Park High School in May 2005, finished boot camp in October and met Justin Carman on his way to training in California. The two returned to Camp Lejeune shortly before they left for Iraq on July 14 of this year. They can be seen wrestling and goofing around on the videotape, Carman said.

"Justin was hugging him and calling him, 'Bro,'" Carman said. "It breaks your heart to even watch it."

Three months after the tape was made, on Oct. 21, Justin Carman saw as Herzberg was shot while they patrolled Anbar province, an insurgent stronghold. At his funeral, friends remembered Cpl. Herzberg's commitment to the military, his Catholic faith and his mother.

Faith Carman said her son cried about losing his friend. She did not want to see Cpl. Herzberg's name disappear as just another statistic on the Department of Defense Web site.

"They're [the public] forgetting their names," Carman said.

It was Carman's idea to start a memorial scholarship fund. Herzberg liked the idea so much that he started one to benefit Severna Park High School graduates. Both scholarships require recipients to volunteer their time and write an essay about Cpl. Herzberg by researching his life.

Carman and her family plan to give at least \$500 a year to the Florida scholarship fund, which will be maintained by the Hillsborough Education Foundation in Hillsborough County, Fla.

The nonprofit foundation will screen applications from seventh- and eighth graders and then send a list of the top five nominees to a selection committee. Cpl. Herzberg's father will be on the committee, along with two other family members. The foundation will provide matching funds for each award. The recipients will get the money when they graduate from high school, provided they keep their grades up and do not get involved in drugs or crime, Carman said.

The elder Herzberg plans to initially fund the scholarship, but he is looking for donations to maintain it. So far, Herzberg has received about \$500 from friends.

His son's unit is scheduled to return to the U.S. in February. Carman hopes her son Justin can present the first scholarship award.

"I hope people are made more aware by this and keep his memory alive," Carman said.

For more information about Lance Cpl. Eric W. Herzberg and the scholarships, visit www.ericwherzberg.com or call his father, Eric F. Herzberg, at 443-939-2333.

[Illustration]

Photo(s); Caption: Eric F. Herzberg (right) has started scholarships in Florida and Severna Park in honor of his son Lance Cpl. Eric W. Herzberg (left), who was killed in Iraq in October.

Credit: Special to The Sun