

# Scholarships named for fallen Marine

## Web connection spurs tribute

[By E.B. FURGURSON III, Staff Writer](#)

Reeling after the loss of his son in Iraq, Eric Herzberg spent some time sending e-mail thank-yous to people who had offered their condolences on a funeral home Web site.

Out of one of those e-mails a scholarship program has blossomed to honor Marine Lance Cpl. Eric Herzberg, a 2005 Severna Park High School graduate who was killed in Iraq's bloody Al Anbar province last month.

On Monday the school announced the Eric W. Herzberg Memorial Scholarship-Maryland, one of two such scholarships that will offer college funding in the fallen Marine's name.

The other will be offered in Florida, where the recipient of one of those e-mailed thank-yous turned out to be the mother of one of Cpl. Herzberg's squad mates.

The birth of the scholarship reflects the changes communications technology has brought to families whose loved ones serve in the military. E-mail, instant messaging, cell phones, digital photos and video help moms, dads, siblings and others keep in touch with troops half a world away.

They also help to create bonds among the families on the home front, especially if the worst happens.

Faith Carman's son Justin, a 19-year-old Marine who shipped out with Cpl. Herzberg early this year, had told his mom about his buddy's death via cell phone.

"He didn't want to talk about it," she said. "Five minutes later that is all he wanted to talk about. He said: 'He was always there for you. He did not cuss like the rest of us. He was just the nicest guy you ever want to meet.' "

At first she was hesitant to mention the idea to Mr. Herzberg, but she wanted to set up a scholarship to honor her son's brother in arms.

Mr. Herzberg was hesitant, too - until he saw the videotape.

Ms. Carman, who lives in Tampa, gave her son a video camera for his birthday last year. He didn't take it to Iraq for fear that it would be ruined.

But during a break before shipping out he recorded himself and his Marine pals horsing around, wrestling, blowing off steam.

"It is the last known footage of my son," said Mr. Herzberg, who lives in Laurel. "Faith was so passionate that actually I was a bit skeptical. But after I saw that tape, I knew she was for real. She has been a great help, a tremendously supportive person."

It was then that she pitched the scholarship idea. Mr. Herzberg thought it was a good one, perhaps a way for something positive to come from his son's sacrifice.

Once Ms. Carman's Florida scholarship began to materialize, Mr. Herzberg decided to do the same at his son's former high school.

The first Eric W. Herzberg Scholarships will be awarded next spring. At Severna Park High a scholarship of at least \$2,500 a year will be given to a deserving senior attending a four-year, two-year or vocational state college.

In Florida, a scholarship of at least \$2,500 will go to an at-risk student in eighth or ninth grade. That amount will be matched by a local scholarship fund. The scholarship winner will also be given support to maintain the grades needed to get into a college.

Two-sided coin

Although new technology helped to give birth to the scholarships, it can also fuel anxiety among military families.

"Any new technology has its pluses and minuses," said Mr. Herzberg, 47, who spent years in the military and is now a government consultant. "It has made the world so much smaller. I never would have hooked up with Faith if it were not for e-mail. That initial connection was a great enabler."

But Ms. Carman said it also causes her to worry more than usual about a child who is in harm's way.

"I went to the Department of Defense Web site and saw someone from my son's unit had been killed," she said. "But they did not identify him. Everyone worried - they saw the unit up there - waiting for the knock at the door."

When she found out it was not her son, more emotions overcame her.

"You feel guilty that you are relieved it is not your son," she said. "Then you are heartbroken for the loss of their friend. It is a horrible roller coaster."

That has driven her not only to help set up the scholarship, but to take a second job to help her pay for care packages for her son's whole platoon.

This week she sent out 91 boxes full of extra blankets, the baby wipes Marines use in lieu of showers and 30 dozen cookies she took two nights to bake. A Tampa television station picked up her story, and donations came in to help defray the \$1,200 in shipping costs.

Now she and Mr. Herzberg have set up the scholarships as a lasting tribute.

"You know a legacy is something older people are supposed to leave for the young. But Eric, and so many others, have left a legacy to us all, an example of a life given to help other people."

The Severna Park scholarship will be announced at the school's annual awards assembly in April.

In Florida the plan is for Cpl. Herzberg's buddy, Lance Cpl. Carman, to hand out the first scholarship. He and his unit are due back in February.

Meanwhile, his mother and thousands of others wait.

For more about the Eric W. Herzberg Memorial Scholarships, or to make a donation to the scholarship fund, go to the Web site, [www.ericwherzberg.com](http://www.ericwherzberg.com).

- No Jumps-

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