



## MEDIA ALERT

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\*PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

### **College-Job Program to Award Students More than \$100 Thousand in Academic Achievement Awards 236 students to be honored at ceremonies on February 7 and 8 in Hodgkins**

**WHAT:** The Chicagoland Regional College Program (CRCP) will recognize 236 students from five area Chicago area colleges for their academic achievement at two upcoming ceremonies. The cash awards will range in size from \$250 to \$1,100 and are given for outstanding academic achievement in the recently completed Fall 2006 semester.

CRCP, in its fourth year, provides students with an opportunity to pursue their academic goals without worrying about how to pay for classes. Students attend one of the program's five colleges (Chicago State University, Moraine Valley Community College, Morton College, Prairie State College and Olive-Harvey College) while working part-time as package handlers at the UPS Hodgkins plant.

In addition to a weekly paycheck, medical benefits and paid vacation, CRCP participants receive paid tuition, books, fees, transportation allowances and apply for rent subsidies to help offset expenses. A consistent work schedule makes combining college and employment more manageable.

- CRCP will award a record amount of \$117,200 in academic awards for the fall semester 2006 – more than \$500 thousand since the program began in 2003.
- 18 students will be awarded certificates for earning 4.0 GPAs.
- 65 students will receive milestone awards for longevity in the program.
- 100 students received \$500 academic awards for earning a 3.0 GPA or higher.

**WHO:** Four current CRCP students will speak at the events including:

Julie Crowley, (Chicago State University). Wife and mother of three, Julie is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business with a cumulative 3.94 GPA while balancing school, work and her family. Oldest son, Michael, is also enrolled in CRCP and is a UPS supervisor. She expects her second son to apply to the CRCP when he graduates in spring 2007.

Donley King, 21, (Moraine Valley Community College). Donley earned his Associate's degree in Art in December with a cumulative 3.4 GPA. He is continuing at Moraine Valley this semester, taking business courses in preparation for a career in film editing. Donley is the first of his siblings (2 older sisters) to complete his degree. CRCP's combined offering of college tuition, a paying job and medical benefits provided the means to pay for his education.

Veronica Hernandez (Morton College). A single mother, Veronica has just completed her first semester in the CRCP with a 3.4 GPA.

Asia Eason, (Chicago State University). Asia earned a 4.0 GPA while taking a fulltime class load of 12 hours and working at UPS.

**WHY:** The skyrocketing costs of college combined with shrinking student aid budgets and sources have created a great need for alternative forms of assistance. Even with aid, the average college graduate today carries a loan balance of some \$19,000 on their back as they enter the workforce. CRCP is designed to make it possible for students to earn a debt-free college education. Applications are currently being accepted for the fall semester.

This is a strong story with **positive community impact, personal triumphs and strong visuals** in the classroom and on the job. Students participating in the program work at UPS' massive Hodgkins package sorting center, the largest ground packaging facility in the nation.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, February 7 at 8:30 a.m. and Thursday, February 8 at 8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** UPS Employment Center, 79<sup>th</sup> and Willow Springs Road, Hodgkins, IL 60525

**PHOTO/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:** Students will receive their individual awards and an oversized check will be presented. Two students will speak at each event and will also be available for interviews. B-Roll is available of honoree Julie Crowley at home with her kids, in classes at Chicago State and working at UPS. Interviews with other CRCP program participants can be arranged as requested.

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