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# State Farm Scholars Offer Thanks for Scholarships

Feb. 23, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Many of the 100 students who are currently attending Illinois Wesleyan University as scholarship recipients supported by grants from the State Farm Companies Foundation had the opportunity Feb. 22 to say “thank you.”

Representatives from State Farm, University administrators and officials, and student recipients came together at the annual luncheon celebrating the long-standing ties between State Farm and Illinois Wesleyan.

Illinois Wesleyan President Eric Jensen welcomed the attendees, noting “we owe a huge debt to State Farm for your support of this institution. Look at the number of students in this room whose lives have been touched by this support,” he said.

Speaking for State Farm, Kimberly Sterling, operations vice president for State Farm Mutual Automobile, said the company awards 100 scholarships – 25 in each class – based on merit and financial need. A 1992 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan, Sterling said State Farm is proud to partner with Illinois Wesleyan to help students meet their educational goals.



Kimberly Sterling, State Farm Mutual Auto Operations Vice President and 1992 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, spoke on behalf of the company.

believes her Illinois Wesleyan education is giving her the tools to use scientific advancements to combat environmental issues affecting her land and people.

“This is why State Farm’s contribution to our education is so important,” said Kerr-Carpenter. “Scholarships like this one allow Illinois Wesleyan to continue to thrive and bring together driven, passionate and diverse students and future world-changers. With State Farm’s generosity, we can forge our own path and carry into the world all of the gifts that our education has given us. On behalf of everyone here today, thank you, State Farm, for investing in our education and our lives.”



Representatives from State Farm are pictured with many student recipients at the 2017 State Farm Scholars luncheon.

Sterling said as she has grown in her 25-year career at State Farm, she has come to fully realize the value of Illinois Wesleyan’s “constant pushing” when she was a student. She said Illinois Wesleyan is “constantly pushing your thinking, pushing you to think broadly, to think deeper, to problem solve, and to help you be thoughtful in your decision making.”

Anna Kerr-Carpenter ’17, a senior anthropology major from Elk Grove, Calif., spoke on behalf of the scholarship recipients. A professional photographer and third-generation Illinois Wesleyan legacy, Kerr-Carpenter told the audience, “in many ways, I didn’t choose Wesleyan; it chose me,” she said. “Even though by choosing this school I carried on a family legacy, my time here was completely my own. I grew my passion for people and telling their stories through my camera, as well as fueled my social justice fire.”

▷ [Read Kerr-Carpenter's full remarks](#)

In “true anthropological fashion,” Kerr-Carpenter related the personal stories of some of her fellow scholarship recipients. Yesenia Martinez Calderon ’20, a first-generation student studying secondary education and Hispanic Studies, said her presence on campus is the result of her parents’ hard work and noted she plans to return to Chicago to help students who, like her, had to go through the college application process alone. Ruth Tadesse ’19, an International Studies major from Ethiopia, appreciates the liberal arts education she is receiving at Illinois Wesleyan because it is making her a more well rounded person. Ojaswee Shreshta ’18, an environmental studies major from Nepal,