

Amway reps raise \$5K for Kasunic scholarship fund at BC3

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Kym Reck, left, and Megan Jefferds, independent contractors with Amway Corp., present a check to Dr. Nick Neupauer, president of Butler County Community College; and to Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation, on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2019. Reck and Jefferds organized the first Sarah Kasunic Adventure 5K Run-Walk held in September on BC3's main campus in Butler Township. The event raised \$5,300 for the Sarah Kasunic Scholarship.

(Butler, PA) A Butler County Community College endowed scholarship established in memory of a 2016 BC3 Nursing, R.N., graduate killed by an automobile in March has topped \$25,000 following the contribution of \$5,300 from Sarah Kasunic's former Amway Corp. colleagues who organized the first Sarah Kasunic Adventure 5K Run-Walk.

The Sept. 7 fundraiser on BC3's main campus in Butler Township drew 213 participants and 19 volunteers. Megan Jefferds and Kym Reck, Amway Corp. independent contractors and former business associates of Kasunic's, donated proceeds from the 5K they initiated to the BC3 Education Foundation on Nov. 19.

Kasunic, 23, was a registered nurse in Knoxville, Tenn., and also sold products as an Amway independent contractor. She and Ashley Moore, 38, of Goodlettsville, Tenn., were killed by a

passing vehicle on Interstate 40 near Knoxville after Kasunic crashed her vehicle and Moore stopped to help, according to Knoxville police.

Jefferds and Reck are among 96 individuals or businesses that have contributed to the Sarah Kasunic Scholarship, which will be awarded for the first time in fall 2020, said Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation.

“It is the largest number of contributors and the largest total amount of money for a memorial scholarship ever,” Purcell said, adding that the response has been “overwhelming and extraordinary.”

Other Amway Corp. representatives have donated directly to the Sarah Kasunic Scholarship fund, Jefferds said, adding that some have contributed up to \$1,000.

The Sarah Kasunic Scholarship will continue the legacy of a student who served as president of BC3’s Rho Phi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, an international academic honor society, and whose academic excellence at Knoch High School was rewarded with a BC3 President’s Scholarship, said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president.

“That’s the significance of Sarah’s scholarship,” Neupauer said. “Certainly all of our scholarships are important in their own unique way. This is one in which future students will be able to benefit from that incredible spirit, drive and passion that Sarah brought to BC3, her family, friends and certainly her nursing profession.”

The 107 walkers and 106 runners at the 5K Run-Walk “represent the love that Sarah gave to so many people,” Jefferds said. “It was really an outpouring of love and respect for Sarah.”

Kasunic “lit up a room when she came in for meetings or when we traveled together,” Reck said. “She was such a warm, sweet, spirited person who loved adventure.”

The Adventure 5K Run-Walk was inspired by Kasunic’s travel to Africa, Asia and to Europe, and by telling Jefferds that a goal of hers for 2019 was to “get really healthy,” Jefferds said. Kasunic had joined a gym for the first time and also wanted to train for her first 5K, according to Jefferds.

“She never really thought of herself as athletic,” said Sarah’s father, Tom Kasunic, of Butler.



Relatives of Sarah Kasunic are shown Saturday, Sept. 7, 2019, at the first Sarah Kasunic Adventure 5K Run-Walk on Butler County Community College’s main campus in Butler Township. Front row, from left, Will Groy, Ben Groy and Karla Groy. Back row, from left, Sarah’s parents, Tom Kasunic and Margaret Kasunic; and Sarah’s siblings Julie, Paul, Michael and Nicholas.

The 5K in which Kasunic wanted to compete was held March 30 in Knoxville, seven days after Sarah passed away.

The 5K on BC3's main campus that drew 232 people showed "Sarah definitely touched a lot of lives," Tom Kasunic said, "a lot more than her mother and I ever realized."

Margaret Kasunic said her daughter had also discussed establishing a scholarship to benefit students in BC3's Nursing, R.N., program.

"It was at BC3 where she realized what she could do in nursing," Margaret Kasunic said. "She knew she could help others. She was always willing to do that."

Less than a month before her death, Kasunic contributed funds to the BC3 Education Foundation to help members of Rho Phi attend a national conference in April in Orlando, Fla.

"It is rare to get gifts from people who are that young," Purcell said. "It is rare not only at BC3, but at any institution, to have a young student give back like that."

Kasunic was a recipient of BC3's President's Scholarship, whose candidates must enroll at BC3 in the first semester following their graduation from a Butler County public high school, where they must also achieve a 3.5 grade-point average and rank in the top 10 percent of their class.

Candidates for the Sarah Kasunic Scholarship must be enrolled full time in BC3's Nursing, R.N., program and have a minimum grade-point average of 3.0.

"It's fantastic to know a benefit can come from that," said Margaret Kasunic, whose family has also created the Kasunic Family Phi Theta Kappa Travel Award, which will benefit Rho Phi members attending the society's national conference.

The second Sarah Kasunic Adventure 5K Run-Walk is planned for Sept. 5, 2020, on BC3's main campus.



Sarah Kasunic, right, is shown at Phi Theta Kappa's national conference in Oxon Hill, Md., in April 2016, while she served as president of Rho Phi, Butler County Community College's chapter of the international academic honor society. From left, Morgan Rizzardi, BC3's associate director of admissions and primary adviser of Rho Phi; and Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president.