

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clay Aurand at 9:05 A.M. on January 30, 2008 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Owen Donohoe- excused

Committee staff present:
Theresa Kiernan, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Dianne Rosell, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Janet Henning, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:
Danny Ellis, Director and President, The Ellis Foundation
Chris Ellis, COO, Ellis Management Company

Representative Shirley Palmer introduced Danny Ellis and his son, Chris Ellis, to Committee members. Representative Palmer told of the family's dedication of providing scholarships to selected children from low to middle income families with an emphasis on single parent families. The scholarship program was started in 1997 in memory of their daughter, Kathy Lyn Ellis Adriance who was a teacher at Blue Valley High School in Johnson County.

Chris Ellis spoke to Committee members and told of the foundation's scholarship program which is in its tenth year and currently supports 545 students with \$8,000 scholarships, giving out over eight consecutive semesters. The scholarship pays up to \$1,000 each semester directly to the student's designated college.

Mr. Ellis told Committee members the foundation's goal is to obtain sufficient funds to maintain over 1000 student scholarships in the program as soon as possible. The foundation is funded by individuals, corporations, and organizations that share their vision to help change young people's lives. (Attachment 1)

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Scott Frank, Legislative Post Audit, spoke to Committee members and gave an overview of the "K-12 Education: Reviewing Issues Related to Special Education Funding" (On file, Legislative Post Audit)

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

The following students were recognized by the Committee for their participation in the Legislative Shadow Day:

Chelsea Jamison, 8th grade, Ottawa Middle School
Abigail Shumway, 8th grade, Ottawa Middle School
Heather Whitford, 12th grade, Shawnee Heights High School
Gabiella Fordiana, 8th grade, Blue Valley Middle School
Regina Marie Budden, 12th grade, St. Marys High School
Jamie Cernich, 8th grade, Harmony Middle School
Josh Bakarich, 9th grade, Eudora Middle School
Delaney Fish, 10th grade, Great Bend High School

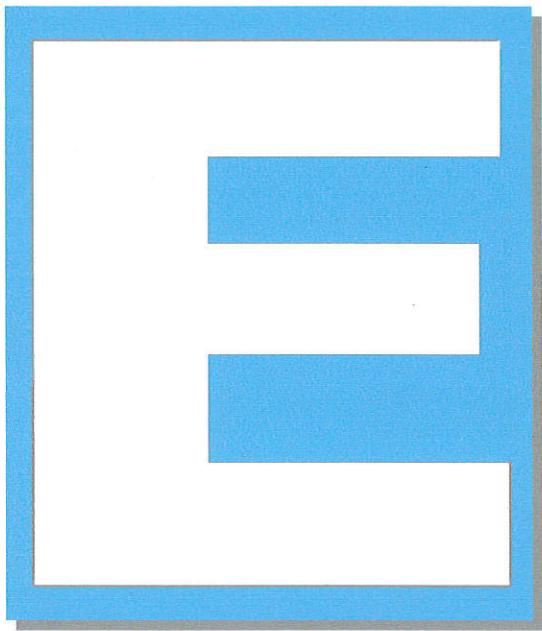
Representative Otto moved to introduce a bill which would let school districts who run day care centers to be able to monitor themselves and not have to deal with Kansas Department Health and Environment. The motion was seconded by Representative Spalding. The motion carried.

Representative Crow moved to introduce a bill reference Medicaid distribution to school districts. The motion was seconded by Representative Horst. The motion carried.

Representative Colloton moved to introduce a bill that would change the way special education funding is distributed to school districts. The motion was seconded by Representative Spalding. The motion carried.

Chairman Aurand informed the Committee members of a new rule which was to take effect immediately. Chairman Aurand advised if a Committee member is argumentative, confronts another Committee member and offends more than fifty percent of the Committee body, the "three strike" rule will apply. If the incident occurs three times, the Committee member will then be suspended from asking/participating in discussions for a period of two weeks. The policy is retroactive to the beginning of the 2008 Legislative session.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2008.



**The
Ellis
Foundation**

Educating Children—Our Investment in the Future



Kathy Lyn Ellis Adriance

**Kathy was a teacher at Blue Valley High School in Johnson County Kansas
and was the inspiration for establishing our scholarship program**

May 31, 1949 June 20, 1997



Chris Ellis, Executive Director
2 South Judson - P.O. Box 54 - Fort Scott, KS 66701
Telephone - 620.223.2232 / Fax - 620.223.2236

Board of Directors

Danny Ellis
Willia Ellis
Jim Banwart
Connie Banwart
Mike Cillessen
Kaye Cillessen
Bobby Patton, Ph.D.
Eleanor Patton, Ph.D.
Tom Scott
Betty Scott
Dave Webb
Wendy Webb

Advisory Board

Gene Bicknell
Marty Bicknell
Mike Brown
Tim Clemons
Mack Colt
Dick Cray
Dave Cummings
Randy Edge
Jim Ferrell
Gary Fish
Sam Freitag
David French
Bill George
Bill Grant
Gary Hall
Barnett Helzberg
Dan Henry
Jim Holland
Charles Holtgraves
Cliff Illig
Kansas City Power & Light
Phil Kirk
Stu Lang
MGP Ingredients, Inc
Sid Miner
Mark M. O'Connell
Reed Oppenheimer
Tony Oppenheimer
Neal Patterson
Frank Perry
Peter Powell
Irv Robinson
Marvin Silliman
David Simpson
Jim Smith
Jack Sutherland
The American Royal

Subject: Scholarships

- The Ellis Foundation provides scholarships to selected children from low to middle income families in America, with an emphasis on single parent families. Our foundation's scholarship program is in its tenth year and currently supports 545 students with \$8,000 scholarships, given out over eight consecutive semesters. The scholarship pays up to \$1,000 each semester directly to the student's designated college. Our commitment for existing scholarships exceeds \$4,000,000.
- The Foundation was incorporated in Kansas in 1990 and is a qualified 501(c)(3) (subchapter 509(a)(1)), Public Charity. See Appendix (1) for a list of our Board of Directors, resumes of principals, and a copy of our tax exemption.
- The Foundation is managed by a private corporation owned and operated by the Ellis family. The corporation manages The Ellis Trust Fund and The Ellis Foundation. The Foundation's current balance sheet and budget are attached as Appendix (2).
- Our goal is to obtain sufficient funds to maintain over 1000 student scholarships in our program as soon as possible. We are funded by individuals, corporations and organizations that share our vision to help change young people's lives. See Appendix (3) for a copy of our Student Scholarship Program's Guidelines and for ways to participate with us.
- Our method of selecting high school seniors for our scholarship program requires us to work closely with the high schools' student counselors. The counselors generally know of families with students who are college prepared but in need of our financial assistance. Students submit their scholarship application to The Ellis Foundation for evaluation. After reviewing the applications, we select the approximate number of students allowed by our fiscal budget. We then contact the counselors to arrange an interview with each candidate. Our final selections are made after personally interviewing each student to discuss education plans, career goals, and financials needs. After awarding the scholarships, we contact the Financial Aid Department at each college and offer our assistance in enrolling our students. We stay in contact and require the student's grades be furnished to us after each semester; enabling us to monitor each student's progress. To review our results, see Appendix (4) for unsolicited comments.
- The Ellis Foundation is dedicated to helping America's youth and will prove worthy of your trust and association.

Educating Children — Our Investment In The Future

Respectfully,

Danny Ellis

President

Chris Ellis

Executive Director

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to provide High School graduates with limited resources, access to higher education. We do so by enabling individuals, corporations, foundations, and institutions to partner with us to provide scholarships that prepare capable students to become America's future leaders.

The Ellis Foundation

By the Numbers

2006-07

(July 1, 2006 thru June 30, 2007)

545 Total Students

356 females

189 males

8% minority students

242 New Scholarships

4 states – KS, MO, OK, KY

76 Colleges & Universities

47 High Schools

82% Graduation Success

\$578,909 Dollars Donated

Our Mission is to provide High School graduates with limited resources, access to higher education. We do so by enabling individuals, corporations, foundations, and institutions to partner with us to provide scholarships that prepare capable students to become America's future leaders.

The Ellis Foundation Board of Directors

Danny Ellis, Director and President
The Ellis Foundation
2 South Judson
Fort Scott, KS 66701

Willa Ellis, Director and Secretary/Treasurer
The Ellis Foundation
2 South Judson
Fort Scott, KS 66701

James Banwart, Director
CPA and Senior Partner
Diehl, Banwart, Bolton, Jarred & Bledsoe Chartered
7 ½ East Wall
Fort Scott, KS 66701

Connie Banwart, Director
1223 Burke
Fort Scott, KS 66701

Mike Cillessen, Director
CEO of C & C Group, Inc.
10012 Darnell Street
Lenexa, KS 66215

Kaye Cillessen, Director
9963 Hemlock
Overland Park, KS 66212

Bobby R. Patton, Ph.D., Director
Past President of University of Central Missouri
5822 Longleaf Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049

Eleanor Patton Ph.D., Director
5822 Longleaf Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049

Tom Scott, Director
Insurance Executive
3020 West 69th Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66208

Betty Scott, Director
3020 West 69th Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66208

David Webb, Director
Webb & Associates
4815 W. 191st Street
Stilwell, KS 66085

Wendy Webb, Director
Director of Blue Valley School District
Parents as Teachers Program
4815 W. 191st Street
Stilwell, KS 66085

DANNY ELLIS

606 Fairway / Fort Scott, Ks. 66701 / 620-223-2232

PERSONAL DATA

Born February 6, 1932 in Rich Hill, Missouri. Graduated from Rich Hill High School. Married Willa J. Marlin on February 8, 1948 and moved to Mattoon, Illinois as a representative for Business Mens Assurance Company. Attended sales training at Purdue University and the University of Illinois. Danny and wife Willa have two children and eight grandchildren. Their daughter Kathy Lyn Ellis Adriance Died in 1997 and they started giving scholarships in her memory. Their son Chris is C.O.O. of the Ellis Management Company.

WORK EXPERIENCE / 1990---PRESENT

Mr. Ellis manages family assets and the Ellis Foundation funds. Mr. Ellis and wife Willa are Semi-retired and reside in Fort Scott, Kansas and Stuart, Florida.

He was part owner and a director of Business Process Management Inc. with corporate headquarters in Fort Scott, Kansas. BPM specializes in processing claims for the health care industry. The company was sold in 2007.

1965---1990

Founder and President of Midwestern Distribution, Inc. and subsidiary B&D Motor, Inc. Midwestern was a common carrier of special commodities operating under authorities issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The company was started with six pieces of equipment and nine employees. In 1969 Midwestern became a public company with their stock traded on the NASDAQ market. Under the direction of Mr. Ellis, Midwestern grew to over 2,000 pieces of equipment, over 2,000 employees and contractors, and close to \$100,000,000 in annual revenue. Mr. Ellis sold the company to Leaseway Transportation in Cleveland, Ohio in 1982 and was a consultant to Leaseway till 1987.

Mr. Ellis was founder and President of Multi Service Corporation and subsidiaries. Multi Service provided a nationwide fuel purchasing service for the trucking industry through a network of truckstops. Discounts were negotiated for fuel purchased with the Multi Service credit card.

Multi Service Aviation was formed as a subsidiary and provided fuel and other services for corporate aircraft. Combined billings were in excess of \$200,000,000 annually.

Multi Service Energy was formed to participate in drilling oil and gas wells in Oklahoma and Kansas. This company, operated by Mr. Ellis owned a working interest in over 100 oil and gas wells.

Corporate offices for the Multi Service companies were in Overland Park, Kansas and had over 100 employees. The credit card companies were sold to the employees in 1989 and the energy company was sold in 1990.

During this time Mr. Ellis served as a director for the Mark Twain Plaza Bank in Kansas City, Missouri and a director for the Citizens National Bank in Fort Scott, Kansas.

1955---1965

Self employed in the agriculture business. President and CEO of Deerfield Grain Inc. and Fort Scott Fertilizer Inc.

CHRIS ELLIS

15125 Melrose Street, Overland Park, KS 66221
620-223-2232

PERSONAL DATA

Mr. Chris Ellis was born on December 29, 1959 in Nevada, Missouri. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Danny Ellis. The family moved to Fort Scott, Kansas in 1961. He graduated from Fort Scott High School in 1978 and moved to Stilwell, Kansas in 1979, where he still resides today. He married Catherine Denise Bruce on August 22, 1986. They have four sons Daniel, Joshua, Christopher and Nathan.

WORK EXPERIENCE

1997-PRESENT

Mr. Chris Ellis is currently the C.O.O. of the Ellis Management Company.

AM-Tek, Inc. was founded in 1997 by Mr. Chris Ellis. AM-Tek, Inc. was responsible for creating custom web site designs, Email services, web site hosting and maintenance. The company had a growing number of satisfied customers when it was sold to Network Innovations, Inc. in October 2001.

1987-1997

Mr. Chris Ellis was the founder and President of American Cargo Systems, Inc., a licensed Property Brokerage company. He worked with many Fortune 500 Companies to logistically manage their transportation cost and move their freight nationwide.

Between the years 1987 and 1991, the company grew 1,064 %. This distinction placed it number 271 in "Inc. Magazines" 500 Fastest Growing Privately Owned Companies.

In 1992, his achievements earned him recognition in "Citation's" Who's Who Among Rising Young Americans.

1979-1987

Multi Service Corporation provided fuel-purchasing services to the trucking industry. During the time Mr. Chris Ellis was the Vice President and Director, he developed a network of truckstops nationwide for transportation companies to purchase fuel. He worked closely with the owners of each truckstop to negotiate the best possible fuel price to pass on to their transportation clients.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: FEB 2 2007

THE ELLIS FOUNDATION
P O BOX 54
FORT SCOTT, KS 66701-0054

Employer Identification Number:
48-1093604
DLN:
506264093
Contact Person:
MS. D. TOBLER ID# 75111
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500

60 Month Period Ends:
JUNE 10, 2010
Addendum Applies:
YES

Dear Applicant:

We have received your notification of intent to terminate your private foundation status under section 507(b)(1)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code during a 60 month period beginning JULY 1, 2005.

The information submitted indicates that you intend to operate as an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Code during the 60 month period.

Based on your proposed activities and support, it is held that you can reasonably be expected to terminate your private foundation status under section 507(b)(1)(B) of the Code. Accordingly, you will be treated as a public charity described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Code for an advance ruling period of 60 months beginning JULY 1, 2005.

Within 90 days after the end of your 60 month period, you must establish to the satisfaction of the Internal Revenue Service that you have qualified as an organization which meets the requirements of paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of section 509(a) of the Code for the 60 month period. If you do establish that fact, you will be so classified for all purposes beginning with the first day of the first taxable year of the 60 month period and, thereafter, so long as you continue to meet the requirements of section 509(a)(1), (2), or (3). If, however, you do not meet these requirements for the 60 month period, you will be classified as a private foundation as of the first day of the first taxable year of the 60 month period.

If you satisfy the requirements of section 507(b)(1)(B) of the Code at the end of your 60 month period, you will not be subject to the provisions of section 507(a), (c), or (g) of the Code.

Grantors and donors may rely on the determination that you are not a private foundation until 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period. If you submit the required information within the 90 days, grantors and contributors may continue to rely on the advance determination until the Service makes a final determination of your foundation status.

Letter 2245 (DO/CG)

1-9

THE ELLIS FOUNDATION

You are required to file Form 990-PF, Return of Private Foundation or Section 4947(a)(1) Trust Treated as a Private Foundation, until you complete your 60 month termination and are classified as a section 509(a)(1) organization. Form 990-PF must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$20 a day, up to a maximum of \$10,000 or 5 percent of your gross receipts (whichever is less), for failure to file a return on time unless there is reasonable cause for the delay. For organizations with gross receipts exceeding \$1,000,000 in any year, the penalty is \$100 per day per return, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay. The maximum penalty for an organization with gross receipts exceeding \$1,000,000 shall not exceed \$50,000. This penalty may also be charged if a return is not complete, so please be sure your return is complete before you file it.

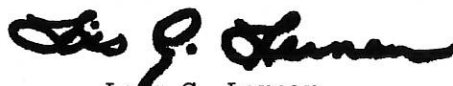
If you do not pay the tax imposed by section 4940 of the Code for any taxable year or years during the 60 month period, and it is subsequently determined that such tax is due for such year or years, you will be liable for interest in accordance with section 6601 of the Code. Since any failure to pay such taxes during the 60 month period is due to reasonable cause, the penalty under section 6651 with respect to the tax imposed by section 4940 shall not apply.

If the heading of this letter indicate that an addendum applies, the addendum enclosed is an integral part of this letter.

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your exempt status and foundation status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,



Lois G. Lerner
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements

Enclosure(s):
Form 872

Letter 2245 (DO/CG)

The Ellis Foundation
Statement of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2007

	<u>Jun 30, 07</u>	<u>Jun 30, 06</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
Cash in Bank - Sweep Account	400,738.46	519,969.23
Money Market Account	316,564.17	23,807.25
Certificates of Deposit	<u>100,000.00</u>	<u>200,000.00</u>
Total Current Assets	817,302.63	743,776.48
Other Assets		
Investments	<u>2,061,260.53</u>	<u>2,068,560.22</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>2,878,563.16</u></u>	<u><u>2,812,336.70</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Retained Earnings	2,637,836.70	2,769,208.91
Restricted Retained Earnings	174,500.00	0.00
Net Income	<u>66,226.46</u>	<u>43,127.79</u>
Total Equity	<u>2,878,563.16</u>	<u>2,812,336.70</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>2,878,563.16</u></u>	<u><u>2,812,336.70</u></u>

1-12

ELLIS FOUNDATION BUDGET
 Fiscal Year 2008/2009 Ending June 30, 2009
 300 - New Students
 676 - Total Students

Projected Income													
	Income	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
CD's	5,300												5,300
BONDS	12,448			3,112			3,112			3,112			3,112
STOCKS	167,252	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938	13,938
MISC INTEREST	51,000	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250
CONTRIBUTIONS	1,153,000		288,250	288,250				288,250	288,250				
TOTAL INCOME	1,389,000	18,188	306,438	309,550	18,188	18,188	21,300	306,438	306,438	21,300	18,188	18,188	26,600

Projected Expenses													
	Expense	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
SCHOLARSHIPS	1,352,000	338,000	338,000				338,000	338,000					
BEACON	36,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
UNITED WAY	1,000				1,000								
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,389,000	341,000	341,000	3,000	4,000	3,000	341,000	341,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000

1-1a

The Ellis Foundation

P. O. Box 54 / 2 South Judson / Fort Scott, KS 66701

620-223-2232 / 620-223-2236 Fax

email: danny@theellisfoundation.org / chris@theellisfoundation.org

web site: www.theellisfoundation.org

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. The scholarship pays up to eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) over eight consecutive semesters. Up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per semester will be paid directly to the designated college and may only be applied for tuition, books, computer fees and on-campus dormitory fees. No summer classes will be paid for.
 2. The scholarships are granted for one year only; however, they may be renewed depending on the student's performance and the availability of foundation funds. Once you have enrolled at one of our designated colleges this scholarship is nontransferable to any other college. Scholarship renewal applications will not be processed until a current transcript has been received by the foundation. If we do not receive your renewal application by the requested date your scholarship will not be renewed. We do not provide scholarship support for students beyond eight (8) consecutive semesters.
 3. A minimum GPA of 2.5 will be required to maintain your scholarship.
 4. Students must present proof of full-time enrollment (12 credit hours minimum) to the foundation before payment will be made. If a student drops below the 12-hour minimum in a semester the next semester payment will be denied.
 5. The scholarship awarded by the Ellis Foundation will be secondary to all other scholarships awarded to the student, including any awards given by the designated college.
 6. Periodically we will send emails to keep updated on your progress. We require that you respond within 15 days to our questions or your scholarship may not be renewed.
- * Your signature acknowledges that you have read and agree to follow the above mentioned scholarship requirements.

Student Signature: _____

Individual Participation Form

The Ellis Foundation

P.O. Box 54 – Fort Scott, KS 66701 – (620)223-2232 – (620)223-2236 Fax
danny@theellisfoundation.org - chris@theellisfoundation.org
www.theellisfoundation.org

“We Change People’s Lives”

YOU CAN TOO!

___ I/We wish to sponsor ___ student(s) at \$1,500 each through one year of college, totaling \$ _____ payable to the Ellis Foundation. **Each \$1,500 student sponsorship will provide a \$2,000 scholarship paid out over two consecutive semesters.**
(33% increase on your investment)

___ I/We wish to sponsor ___ student(s) at \$6,000 each through four years of college, totaling \$ _____ payable to the Ellis Foundation. **Each \$6,000 student sponsorship will provide an \$8,000 scholarship paid out over eight consecutive semesters.**
(33% increase on your investment)

___ I/We wish to make a cash contribution: _____

___ I/We would like to include the Ellis Foundation in our Will. (Contact us with estate plans)
Estate Planning Referrals Available

The Ellis Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) (subchapter 509(a)(1)) Public Charity and all gifts are Tax-Deductible.

Sponsor Name(s): _____

Honoring or In Memory of Name(s): _____

Home Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Signatures(s) #1: _____ #2: _____

Educating Children, Our Investment in the Future



Mr. And Mrs. Ellis

I would like to thank you for your generous contributions to not only myself but also my classmates. There were many individuals who really needed this scholarship, and will strive to retain it. I hope I can make you as proud of me as the community is of you two. What you two are doing is good, don't let it end.

Sincerely Yours,
Kellen A. Fischer

I have decided to become an elementary school teacher so I can help children and make a difference in their lives, as you have done for me. I hope that I'm stable enough financially someday to carry on the scholarships you started. I thank God everyday for the blessings in my life...and 2 of them are the 2 of you!! Thank you. So much! God Bless You,

Bryna Clarkson



Mr. & Mrs. Danny Ellis,

I am writing to you to thank you for your thoughtfulness of choosing Rich Hill as a new place to offer a scholarship. I am ever so thankful that you chose me as one of the five recipients from Rich Hill High School. Your contribution will help me tremendously in my near future as I go off into the "real world", to pursue a higher education. Thanks Again!

Amber Poulter



Mr. And Mrs. Ellis,

Thank you so much for the opportunity you have given me. By receiving this Scholarship many of the fears that I had about next year have gone away. I promise you that I will work hard next year and the years to come. I will not let this money be wasted and I will do all that I can to make the most of myself. Again, thank you for everything you have done for me, it means so much.

Sincerely,

Nathan Magee

Danny & Willa,

I just received the great news that you have accepted my application for another year. Your scholarship funding is a big help to me and my entire family. I just wanted to thank you again, that this scholarship will help me throughout the school year.

Thanks!

Amy Wetter



Mr. & Mrs. Dan and Willa Ellis,

On behalf of this scholarship that you have granted me, I would like to thank you once again. I'm pleased to say that I do have people looking out for me through my college years. The fact that you are helping students like me is a wonderful thing.

Sincerely,

Adina R. Murry



Danny & Willa,

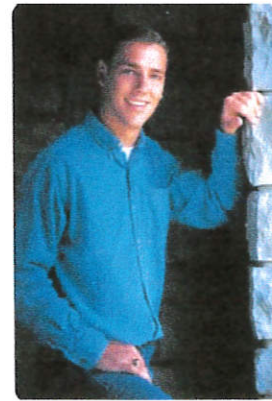
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to receive a good college education, I'm now a Co-teacher at Nevada Head Start. I absolutely love working with children. My classes are going pretty good and I hope to have my Associate's degree by Spring.

Thanks again for all your help,
Katie Gillery

Danny and Willa,

I would like to thank you again. It is such a great honor to be able to represent you as I try to find my path. The scholarship you have awarded me will help me find that path and be successful.

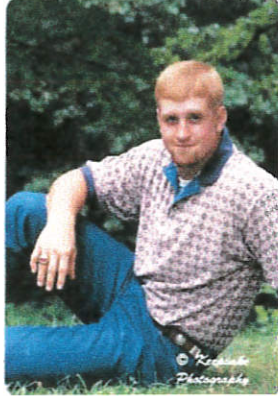
Thanks!
Chris Brocka



Dear Danny and Willa,

I want to thank you for once again giving me a scholarship. Your financial support of my college career has been a blessing. I can't believe it is all ready my senior year. It has gone by fast. Thank you again for renewing the scholarship.

Thank you,
Melissa Schapeler



Dear Mr. And Mrs. Ellis,

I would like to thank you for your help in furthering my education. It is a true blessing that I will always remember and be thankful for.

Sincerely,
Nathan Wells

Mr. And Mrs. Danny Ellis:

Thank you so much for extending your kindness to me for the past three years, and also my fourth and final year. I will be graduating in May with a Marketing & Sales major and will enter the real world! You both have been so generous to me and I will never forget it! Thank you for all you have done for me!

Love,
Bethany Jagels



Dear Danny and Willa Ellis Foundation,

Thank you so much for choosing me as one of the recipients of your scholarships. I am so grateful to you and your foundation. I always admire individuals and businesses who take their own money and use it to reward seniors with scholarships. You truly are doing a wonderful thing. Investing in us, the youth, you are investing in tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Earlie Fischer



Dear Mr. And Mrs. Ellis,

Thank you for selecting me to be one of the recipients for your Scholarship. You are very generous and giving. I appreciate all that you do. Your scholarship will help me achieve my goal of attending college.

Sincerely,
Angela Nitchals

I just wanted to thank you for the scholarship you have awarded me. I really appreciate your interest in my scholastic future.

Thanks!
Tyler Woods



Mr. & Mrs. Dan and Willa Ellis,

Thank you dearly for the scholarship. I'm very grateful. It will greatly help me towards becoming a licensed architect.

Thank you again,
Amelia Schapeler

Foundation support helps PSU grad

By Laura Hyer, Tribune Staff Writer

As printed in the Ft. Scott, KS Tribune - Wednesday, December 10, 2003

PITTSBURG, KS— Morgan Croan is grateful for the Ellis Foundation and is looking forward to becoming a college graduate. Croan, 22, graduates from Pittsburg State University this month with a bachelor's degree in education, a major in mathematics, and a minor in special education. Croan said hard work and the help of a locally based scholarship foundation, which raises money to fund college education for regional high school students, helped her achieve her dream of becoming a teacher. "It would have been possible, but difficult to attend college without the Ellis scholarship," Croan said. "I will graduate in two weeks without owing any money on student loans." Local businessman Danny Ellis, his wife, Willa, and son, Chris, expanded the family goal to send middle and low-income high school seniors to college by taking their college scholarship fund public in May. The move is designed to help generate more money by allowing donors— both private and corporate— to make contributions to the Ellis scholarship fund. "This is our business and they are our dividends," said Danny Ellis, speaking of scholarship recipients. Croan a Fort Scott High school graduate, is finishing her last week of student teaching at Girard High School. Croan said the scholarship also allowed her to enjoy many campus activities through financial freedom. "The Ellis Foundation scholarship made it possible for me to become a leader on campus," Croan wrote in a letter to the foundation last summer. "Without the Ellis Scholarship I would have had to turn down many of the opportunities that came my way." Croan said concentrating on studies was easier because of the scholarship. Croan said she really didn't know how fortunate she was until her second semester at PSU. "If I didn't have the Ellis scholarship I would have had to get a job," Croan said. "College is stressful enough, and without the scholarships I would not be graduating now."

Croan's sister, Blair, who is in her sophomore year at PSU, also is studying on an Ellis scholarship. Croan said she and Blair work hard to show their parents and the Ellis family how thankful they both are for the opportunity. Croan said she comes from a single-parent home. Morgan's mother, Gayla, teaches fifth grade students at Eugene Ware Elementary School. Croan said it was never a matter of if, but when she went to college. "My parents started saving for college when I was born." Croan said. "I came from a one-parent household... mom's a teacher and you know they don't make that much." "If I didn't work hard in high school and college it would have really put a strain on mom's finances," Croan said. "The scholarships don't cover all the cost, but they really take the bite off the tuition bill." Croan, who will graduate as a third-generation teacher, said she is thankful for the help. "If the mission of the Ellis Foundation Scholarship is to make a difference in a person's life, that mission has certainly been fulfilled," Croan said. "My life has been deeply impacted



Tribune Photo/Kenny Felt

Morgan Croan, Pittsburg, sits with a few of the mathematics books she has collected while studying math and special education at Pittsburg State University. Croan attended PSU with financial help from the Ellis Foundation

by the Ellis' generous scholarship and I will forever be grateful to the Ellis Foundation." The Ellis family began the college scholarship fund to honor their daughter, the late Kathy Lyn Ellis, in 1997. The Ellis Foundation hopes to send 1,000 students a year to college. Students can contact high school counselors to determine eligibility for Ellis scholarships.