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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Scholarship honors memory of Fire Marshal's late wife

Cory Ausenbaugh's love of education motivated Fire Fighter Association to create program

PROSPER (June 21, 2010) An endowment program aimed at providing partial college-level scholarships to deserving graduates of Prosper High School and named for a locally-recognized supporter of education has been created by the Prosper Fire Fighters Association, an auxiliary group affiliated with the Town of Prosper Fire Department, according to Prosper Fire Department Captain Curtis Smith, a member of the Association.

The scholarship program's namesake, Cory Ausenbaugh, died last year after a sudden stroke. She was the wife of the Town of Prosper's Fire Marshal Bryan Ausenbaugh, and the mother of two young children, son JB, 12 and daughter Becca, 10. Her personal commitment to education was clearly demonstrated by virtue of her status as an undergraduate student at the time of her death. She had enrolled in classes at the University of North Texas, majoring in education, while also working as a teacher's aide at Judy Rucker Elementary School in Prosper. Unfortunately, she died before completing her degree.

It was her unabashed devotion to education that prompted members of the Association to conceive the scholarship program, said Smith. The initial endowment for the first scholarship awarded was funded by donations from the Fire Fighters Association, local consultant Brenda Jean Patrick and an anonymous donor.

"It was a way of honoring Cory, and her desire to see everyone further their education," said Smith.

The recipient of the first scholarship is Hillary Herring, a 2010 graduate of Prosper High School. Herring has chosen to attend Austin College in Sherman, and will use the proceeds of the scholarship for expenses related to her enrollment.

Herring expressed gratitude to the Fire Fighter Association for honoring her with the first scholarship of the program, especially since she did not get a chance to know the late Cory Ausenbaugh. "I'm extremely grateful for the award. I feel very privileged to have been chosen, and a little surprised as well," she said.

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Still divided between choosing to major in journalism or elementary education, Herring can count on her work with the Ausenbaugh children as preparation should she enter teaching. She was a volunteer tutor for both children. Herring was introduced to the Ausenbaugh children by Holly Ferguson, principal at Rucker Elementary, where the Ausenbaugh children have attended.

In describing Herring's dedication to the Ausenbaugh children's scholastic development, Smith explained why she was such an overwhelming choice for the scholarship. "The Ausenbaugh family wanted to pay her for her service as tutor and mentor to the kids, but she refused to accept any money, choosing instead to devote her energies on a volunteer basis. That showed the kind of person she is," he said. "It also demonstrates that her selection as the program's first recipient was well-placed."

The Prosper Fire Fighters Association voted to extend the scholarship to Herring unanimously. In addition to the financial award, Herring also received a scrapbook containing photos of the Ausenbaugh family, including Cory.

Inspired by the program's objectives and the dedication to the cause demonstrated by the Fire Fighter Association, the Prosper Police Department also joined the effort to raise additional funds for the scholarship program.

The Police Department has announced the inaugural Cory Ausenbaugh Memorial Scholarship 5K Fun Run and 1 Mile Run/Walk. The event is set for the morning of Saturday, Oct. 9, according to event chairs Prosper Police Captain Gary McHone and Municipal Courts Administrator Amy Lightfoot.

"As the Town's Fire Marshal, Bryan has a direct impact on the safety and well-being of all of our residents. His effectiveness, though, was the result of the loving and unselfish support of Cory," said McHone. "She kept the family moving in the right direction, and was Bryan's primary supporter," he added.

The run/walk is among a long list of fund-raising events and activities being developed to boost funds for the program, thereby allowing it to provide more partial scholarships to graduating seniors. The 5K Fun Run and 1 Mile Run/Walk are scheduled for the same day as the annual Prosper Health and Safety Fair.

Sponsors are being sought to assist with the expenses related to the race. Interested individual or businesses who want to serve as sponsors should contact Capt. McHone or Amy Lightfoot at 972-347-2226.

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ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 9,000 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 90,000 residents, Prosper's vision is to remain a "Place Where Everyone Matters."