



## JOSEPH HOWLAND FDEA EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

The winner of this year's Howland Award is Philip Charles Nichols. Philip is a student at Northwest Florida State College (formerly Okaloosa-Walton College) who has a passion for learning and language, particularly spoken word performances. Philip was chosen because of his stellar grades as well as excellent recommendations. His essay follows.

~Tammy Cherry

### Developmental Mathematics

When certain people think about taking a math class, they tend to view the potential situation as an unpleasant task that needs to be completed; therefore, they fail to understand that they have the opportunity to gain knowledge and expand their intellectual scope. Unfortunately, I was once one of those people. As far as I was concerned, arithmetic and algebra happened to be number puzzles that would not aid me in acquiring a comfortable lifestyle. I was wrong. Not knowing how to complete basic math problems stopped me from graduating with my class, kept me from making good money in an occupation, and put my finances in a state of crisis. However, taking prep mathematics has given me the basic skills

that I will have to use for the rest of my life.

I was scheduled to graduate from high school in the summer of 2002, but in order for me to receive a diploma I would have to pass the High School Competency Test. The two portions of the test that were administered by the state were English and Math. The English portion was not too difficult; I passed it on my second attempt. However, I did not successfully complete the math portion until my ninth attempt. My lack of knowledge held me back, but after taking prep arithmetic and prep algebra, I am equipped to deal with basic math problems. Becoming acquainted with elementary mathematics will help me achieve a college education, yet it will also aid me in any occupation I obtain.

A couple of years ago, I was employed at a gas station. It was my job to work with customers, clean the store, and count money. I happened to do the first two aspects of my job well, but when it came counting money, I always had to ask for assistance because I did not understand basic math. This held me back from promotion and better payment opportunities. Since completing the developmental math courses at Okaloosa-Walton College, I have given myself more employment

opportunities that will aid me in the future. Math is a powerful tool that may aid me in receiving a job promotion, but it will also allow me to better handle my finances.

Two weeks before my twenty-first birthday, I moved into my own apartment; it was one of the happiest moments of my life, but the financial aspect of independence was not something that I was familiar with. Paying rent, the light bill, and the car insurance bill with a nine-to-five low paying job requires commonsense and strategy with basic math skills. I barely new how to multiply and divide, so I had a lot of difficulty balancing my check-book and paying my bills on time. Since taking developmental math courses, I have a better understanding of how to make smart financial decisions. Developmental math courses have helped out a great deal, and I will always appreciate that.

Numbers play a large part in the world that we live. They are required in school. A student needs to learn math in order to graduate. The workforce requires people to understand basic math. Everyday life also calls for math quite often; therefore, I am happy to have been able to receive this knowledge.

~Philip Charles Nichols

