

Pair earn scholarships for serving community

[Final Edition]

The Record - Kitchener, Ont.

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Date: Sep 12, 2006

Section: LOCAL

Text Word Count: 335

Document Text

Two students active with local mental health and multicultural agencies will receive \$1,000 scholarships to further their studies in social work and international development.

The annual Helmut Braun memorial awards will be awarded Friday to Kurosh Shahabi and Ameil Joseph at Kitchener's Centre for Research and Education in Human Services.

Braun, a social activist and advocate for the rights of the mentally ill, was struggling with schizophrenia when he killed himself in 2001. At the time of his death, he worked as a community researcher at the non-profit centre at Ontario and King streets.

The scholarships for students in need financial need were established by the centre and a local self-help group that helps people cope with various forms of mental illness.

The centre is involved in community-based research on social issues and the self-help group is organized by people who have survived mental illness and now provide help for others.

Shahabi is taking a collaborative program in international development at the University of Guelph, and Joseph is in the master of social work program at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Centre co-ordinator Joanna Ochocka said Shahabi, who came to Canada from Iran, has worked with immigrants and refugees for six years at various Kitchener agencies.

He has volunteered with Kitchener's Multicultural Centre, Reception House for refugees, Amnesty International, YMCA Cross Cultural Services and the Downtown Community Health Centre.

Joseph, whose family came to Canada from Guyana, has lived in Waterloo all his life and has been active in social justice issues. He has volunteered at Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health, Grand River Hospital and the multicultural centre.

Braun scholarships are awarded to students working in areas of peace and conflict resolution, social justice, community development and cross-cultural matters.

Braun, a local Marxist-Leninist candidate in the 1997 federal election, was also involved in groups protesting racism in the early 1990s.

The memorial fund is administered by the Mennonite Foundation of Canada and anyone interested in donating is asked to call 519-741- 1318.

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