



NEWS RELEASE

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Ed Kimminau, Director,
North American Fastpitch Association - Kansas

SALINA, Kansas — Twelve standout softball players earned college scholarships at the Sunflower Bank Softball Showcase Kick-Off Banquet on Friday, August 8.

Sanctioned by the North American Fastpitch Association and sponsored by Sunflower Bank, the Softball Showcase offers softball players the chance to play against other standout players – and perhaps attract the attention of college coaches. The scholarship winners received the awards after entering an essay contest in conjunction with the Softball Showcase.

Janessa Putney of Pomona, Kan., and **Lindsey Williams** of Valley Center, Kan., each earned a grand-prize \$500 scholarship to the eventual college of their choice, administered by NAFA and Sunflower Bank. Runners-up earned \$200 scholarships: **Bre Beckerman** (Inman, Kan.), **Shawna Borger** (Overland Park, Kan.), **Hannah Buenger** (Osage City, Kan.), **Hannah Crowe** (Anthony, Kan.), **Hannah Hansen** (Silver Lake, Kan.), **Milan Piva** (Parsons, Kan.), **Kaley Rodriguez** (Gypsum, Kan.), **Cassie Schlesener** (Gypsum), **Katie Traffas** (Medicine Lodge, Kan.), and **Lenae Wells** (Emporia, Kan.).

More than 180 girls from five states attended Sunflower Bank's tenth annual Softball Showcase on August 8 and 9. A unique event, the Showcase is an affordable tournament featuring the chance for players to play in a round-robin tournament in front of more than 30 college coaches, with hopes of earning a scholarship or college attention well before their senior seasons.

"These scholarships are a testament to the work ethic and commitment to softball by these players," said **Ed Kimminau**, director of the Kansas AFA. "It's a treat to meet and work with all of these players. We're extremely proud of the winners, and all players in attendance. It's truly a great event for the sport of softball."

Sunflower Bank and NAFA selected two grand-prize scholarship winners and runners-up from a pool of more than 100 essay entries, submitted by choice upon entry into the Showcase in July. Each girl was given the opportunity to explain what role softball plays in their current life and in their future goals.

Scholarship winners received their awards at the Showcase Kick-Off Banquet on Friday night, Aug. 8. During the banquet, players and families have a chance to visit with college coaches and players in attendance – the event attracts coaches from most community college and Div. III schools in Kansas.

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Normally the girls play three games with randomly-selected teams under tutelage of a college softball coach on Saturday, however, rain postponed the round-robin tournament until Aug. 10. The tournament features four pools of nine-player teams, a chance for players to test themselves against incoming seniors from all over the state, with teaching and improving as the focus. During the last decade, the showcase has grown into a premier softball recruiting event in Kansas. Several girls each year have earned scholarships as a result of contacts made at the Showcase.

“With the showcase, we hope to bring out the best in these young athletes and assist each of them as they pursue their dreams of playing collegiate softball,” said **Phyllis Pickel**, Sunflower Bank executive vice president of marketing. “It’s a great event for the girls, their families, the Salina community and the sport of softball.”

Sunflower Bank was founded in 1892 and is a family-owned bank with 35 locations in Kansas and Colorado. Sunflower Bank now counts more than \$1.6 billion in assets. Its home office is located in Salina, Kansas, with other offices located in Colby, Dodge City, Ellinwood, Great Bend, Hays, Junction City, Lawrence, Liberal, Manhattan, McPherson, Osborne, Russell, Topeka, Victoria and Wichita, Kansas, and Cañon City, Monte Vista, Pueblo, Salida and South Fork, Colorado.

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– *John Hanley*
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