

Every high school student looks forward to the milestone photograph that says he has arrived. The Crafts are helping deserving students achieve that goal.

Wish come true

Many rising seniors do not have the opportunity to choose the photographer who will create their momentous senior portraits.

Last year, as I started to work on my studio's

senior portrait marketing campaign for the Class of 2008, I was struck by just how many students in our area wouldn't get to choose. For some of these students, whose

Each scholarship winner received a Deluxe Portrait Session and a Senior Portrait Package (11x14 portrait, smaller gift portraits and wallet-size prints), a \$650 value.

This is the second year that Craft Photographic Gallery has offered the scholarship. Last year, Nichole Armour was one of three recipients.

parents had fallen on bad times, there would be no senior portrait at all.

Craft Photographic Gallery couldn't fulfill the needs of all those students, but we could certainly make a wish come true for three of them. I came up with the Senior Portrait Scholarship Program to accomplish it. We solicited applicants to write essays about themselves or another student whom they nominated for the scholarship. Our choice of three recipients would be based on those essays. Each would be awarded a custom senior portrait session, a portrait package with a wall portrait, and all the extras.

I sent promotional packets to the area newspapers, school guidance counselors and junior class advisers, and made the info and application available for download on our Web site, craftphotography.com.

I didn't foresee how hard it would be to choose the recipients. The essays told stories of parents who had lost jobs, single parents struggling to take care of a houseful of children, even a girl on the eve of gastric bypass surgery, who anticipated feeling beautiful for the first time in her life. The essays were written by parents, students, and even a senior nominating her best friend. She couldn't afford Craft senior portraits herself, but she was more concerned that her friend wouldn't have a portrait at all.

With our staff, we managed to select the three students. We awarded the remaining applicants a complimentary senior session and a portrait package discount. It was a privilege to honor all these students at such an important time in their life. ■

As a reference for starting your own senior portrait program, see Lori Craft's press releases announcing her Senior Portrait Scholarship Program at craftphotography.com. Look for the "View Scholarship Information" link in the Seniors section. Craft Photographic Gallery is in Marshall, Mich.