

Clark College scholarship goes to BG student

The annual Pat Fencl Scholarship was awarded to Battle Ground's Aaron Cliburn at Clark College's 2012 GED/High School Completion recognition ceremony held June 23 in the O'Connell Sports Center gymnasium.

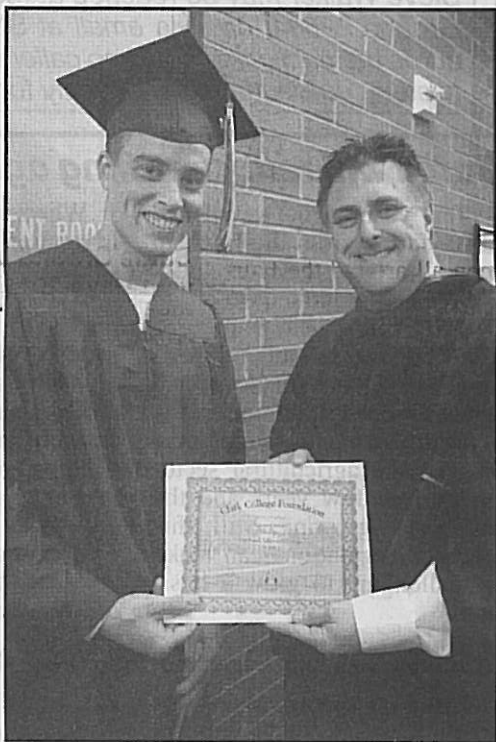
The Pat Fencl Scholarship is presented each year to a student who has completed their GED to help them take the next step in their education and training. Cliburn said he will use the \$1,500 scholarship to pursue his goal of becoming a paramedic firefighter.

Cliburn was just one of many students honored at the event.

"This program has molded me into the person I am today," said Joseph Luczek, who earned his high school completion through Clark College, capturing the essence of the ceremony. Luczek, who dropped out of high school, said, "Clark's nurturing environment provided me with a safe and supportive learning environment."

Graduate Lorella Crosswell described the challenges she faced, at age 50, in earning a GED. From a childhood spent partly in foster care to serving as a foster mother herself, Crosswell spent more than 30 years planning to earn her GED but "something always got in the way." Now, she said, "I know that as long as I don't give up, there will always be an opportunity for growth and success ... I am now in control of my destiny and responsible for my life."

Graduate Joshua Laurence,



PAT FENCL SCHOLARSHIP recipient Aaron Cliburn of Battle Ground (left) receives congratulations from Dr. Ray Korpi, Dean of Developmental Education, English, Communications & Humanities at Clark College.

who also completed a GED, spoke of dropping out of high school, drug addiction and time in jail. Today, he has "been clean and sober for three and a half years." Having completed his GED, he has registered for more classes at Clark.

Clark College President Bob Knight told the graduates and their families, "In challenging times, it's too easy to become pessimistic – too easy to focus on what's wrong or what's hard. You are here today because you have been resourceful, resilient and" – yes - optimistic."

Knight added, "You understand that true optimism requires more than positive thinking. It requires choices. It requires actions. You have made those choices and put in that hard work. Because of your belief – your optimism - you are here today. And that's why we are so optimistic about your future."