

For Immediate Release

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SACRED HEART PREP STUDENT WINS \$2,000 DISCUS SCHOLARSHIP

Joe Wise was named the December 2010 Discus Scholarship winner by the Discus Awards, a national program that provides recognition and scholarship opportunities for multi-talented students who demonstrate excellence both inside and outside of school

<http://www.discusawards.com/>

Bethesda, MD (January 3, 2011) – Joe Wise, a senior at Sacred Heart Prep in California, was named the recipient of the December 2010 Discus Scholarship, a national college scholarship that provides \$2,000 to ten multi-talented high school students each year who demonstrate excellence both inside and outside of school.

A driven student who fights a challenging illness, Joe has overcome difficult obstacles to achieve in the areas of community service, athletics, and academics.

Joe suffers from mitochondrial disease, which weakens his muscles and makes any type of physical activity extremely challenging. This has not stopped Joe from accomplishing tremendous success across a broad range of activities. As a self-made spokesman for his disease and those who suffer from it, Joe has lobbied several local and national politicians regarding both financial and political support for bills such as *Hr. 3502* and *S2858* that have the potential to improve the quantity and quality of care for the victims of mitochondrial disease.

In addition to his activism, Joe is a remarkable athlete. “I swim because it keeps me alive,” Joe writes. As a competitive swimmer and a member of the 2008 U.S. Paralympics Team, Joe has fought through the challenges his illness has presented him to excel in the national spotlight. He is also on the National Team for the U.S. Paralympics and a member of The Santa Clara Swim Club, and he is now working toward swimming in college and at the 2010 Paralympics in London.

Academically, Joe has maintained his focus, even after missing six weeks of school in his junior year due to his mitochondrial cells failing. “As a student who has a life threatening illness,” Joe writes, “I have worked hard to stay in school. Most children with my disease are home schooled. I have chosen to go to school every day where I can have a somewhat normal life.” Joe has lost the use of his muscles in his hands and relies on teachers who scribe for him. Even with all the challenges he faces, Joe currently has a 4.0 GPA in his senior year.

Joe embodies the mission of the Discus Awards (www.DiscusAwards.com), the organization behind the Discus Scholarship. Launched in November 2009, the Discus Awards looks beyond test scores, grades, and athletics to recognize students whose multi-dimensional talents and passions span three of ten attributes, including community service, work, technology, athletics, academics, and the arts.

The \$2,000 Discus Scholarship is awarded to one Discus Award winner each month of the school year. In addition to becoming eligible for a Discus Scholarship, Discus Award winners are profiled on the Discus Awards site (www.discusawards.com/winners) and [Facebook page](#), providing them with a powerful new tool for showing colleges the full range of their diverse strengths and interests. Students can apply for a Discus Award throughout the year.

Since its soft launch in November 2009, the Discus Awards has attracted tens of thousands of nominees from every state in the U.S. plus D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Winners are selected by a judging panel of teachers, counselors, and education professionals.

“With his energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to service, athletics and his school work, Joe exemplifies everything the Discus Scholarship stands for,” said Devin Schain, CEO of the Discus Awards and Campus Direct. “At a time when it’s harder than ever to pay for college, we’re giving recognition and support to the kind of leaders who will thrive in a world that increasingly requires creative thinking, dedication, and a wide range of strengths.”

Students may nominate themselves for a Discus Award at www.DiscusAwards.com, or be nominated by parents, teachers, counselors, coaches, or friends. They are then asked to submit references and write short essays describing their accomplishments in three out of ten major categories, or attributes, of student life: Academics, Arts, Athletics, Community Service, Faith, Government, Green, Technology, Work, and Other Achievements.

To show that they are more than just words on a page, nominees also are encouraged to upload photos and videos that illustrate their achievements.

The Discus Awards was created by Campus Direct, a burgeoning boutique global education company, and Recognition Media, the owner and producer of major awards programs including The Webby Awards and The Telly Awards.

To nominate yourself or someone you know, please visit www.DiscusAwards.com.

About The Discus Awards

The Discus Awards (www.DiscusAwards.com) is the only awards and scholarship program honoring active and engaged high school students who excel in and out of school. Looking beyond grades, test scores, and win-loss records, the Discus Awards recognizes students for achievement in at least three areas, from community service and work to faith and the arts. Winners are selected by a panel of teachers, counselors, and education professionals, and each winner is eligible for a \$2,000 college scholarship awarded each month of the school year. The Discus Awards is presented by Campus Direct, a burgeoning boutique global education company, and Recognition Media, the owner and producer of major awards programs, including The Webby Awards and The Telly Awards.

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