Rising Star Sam Coleman finds his mission

The Rising Star Award honors alumni age 40 and under who have shown exceptional achievement in a career, public or volunteer service, or reached a position of distinction for someone so recently graduated. Sam Coleman, '99, was selected for his exceptional art career and dedication to youth ministry.

Finding his love for art by first grade, Sam Coleman, 35, spent much of his time growing up in rural Bismarck exploring art and testing what else he wanted to do in life. He grew in faith at Shiloh Christian School, was homeschooled between fourth and 10th grade, and spent his last two high school years in Michigan. By age 18, the seeker had a paramedic license and was gaining political experience as a page in the 1997 Legislature. While at BSC studying health education, he earned a semester credit by working in a Russian orphanage for three months.

“I always liked medical stuff, people, ministry, politics, arts – I tried a ton of different things,” Coleman said. “It was always a process of narrowing down what I thought my strengths were.”

After graduating from BSC in 1999, he was off to Minneapolis and The Atelier art school for three years of studio training in classical realism. As one of 17 accepted students, he painted all day expanding his skills into portraiture, landscape and still life. Nights and weekends, he attended seminary at Magdalen College, receiving his ordination as a licensed minister and a bachelor's degree in biblical studies in 2003. Students were taught in the Oxford University-style, their knowledge tested after four years in one massive three-day exam.

Coleman returned to Bismarck, confident he had figured it out. He launched into an art career full time. Eventually, he realized his open-ended life as an artist needed structure, plus something was missing. He started volunteering at Charity Lutheran Church in north Bismarck. After six months, the position of youth ministry director opened and Coleman applied. That was nine years ago. His job will transition in June to third pastor at Charity, where he will still work with youth.

“During high school and the two years at Bismarck State College, I often wondered what direction my life would have, and somehow I knew that art and ministry were both passions that I had.”

“I was always interested in ministry, but never had any idea what part,” Coleman said. “I found youth ministry is exactly where I should be. It has become food for the soul and a perfect fit for me.”

His work at Charity involves organizing and speaking at weekly youth groups, events and Bible studies, organizing mission trips and fundraising activities, and talking with kids and families about a relationship with Christ and other things in their lives. The combination of youth ministry and artist are a balance for him, he said. Art can be “finished” on canvas, while ministry offers no such completion. Each allows for the other.

“Art is more than a job. It's a passion,” Coleman said. “Everywhere I go, I'm looking for beauty. My mind is constantly creating paintings. The flexible schedule of ministry has allowed me to fulfill art as a passion rather than an income.”

BSC helped set the trajectory for his life’s work with his semester in Russia, when he kept a journal as part of a course credit.

“That speaks volumes for how BSC operates – a win-win for college students,” Coleman said. “BSC was a place of learning, not dogmatic theory. Whenever I talk to young people, I always tell them what a good

“One of my first memories was going to the top of a hill and gazing at the sunset with my father and little sister. I also spent a lot of time wandering the prairie, hunting with family, riding horses in the badlands, and having many pets and animals on our hobby farm. From these experiences and many others, I came to love beauty, animals, and the grandeur of the created world.”

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Celebrations abound in upcoming 75th year

Bismarck State College will celebrate 75 years of history with a full year of celebrations beginning in Fall 2013 and continuing through Fall 2014.

Information on upcoming events, photos and more will be posted over the next year at bismarckstate.edu/75years. Also watch for a commemorative summer edition of Connections that expands on where BSC has been and what our beyond has in store.

Major 75 year events

- September 23 - October 27, 2013
  **BSC Alumni Art Exhibit**
  Gannon Gallery, BSC Library
  "If you are interested in exhibiting, contact the BSC Alumni office by e-mail or call (701) 224-5692 or 800-272-2586 for more information.

- November 5-8, 2013
  **John F. Kennedy: 50 Years Later Symposium**
  jfk.bscsymposium.org/

Vehicle donations bring Toolbox Program near goal

Three vehicles donated to the BSC Foundation and repaired by BSC students in the automotive program, were sold in March with all proceeds going to the Dean D. Gunsch Toolbox Program.

The goal of the Toolbox program is to grow the fund large enough to purchase toolboxes for all incoming Bismarck State College automotive technology students.

"The BSC Foundation and the Automotive Technology program faculty hope to provide tool boxes for all incoming 2013 students. We’d like to fund the other half of the toolboxes in the fall of 2014,” says Lee Friese, department chair and associate professor of automotive technology.

Toolboxes cost up to $3,200 per student, a significant hardship for many, according to Friese. Toolbox costs can hold students back from enrolling in the program.

"Many of the students work part-time in the field which means they need one tool box at school and one at work,” he says.

The fund was one of Dean Gunsch’s final projects before his passing in 2012.

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Rising Star, accomplished artist and photographer, fondly remembers BSC, continued from page 4

Coleman teaches art workshops at a local gallery and is preparing for a one-man show in November. Because he is always gathering subject matter by taking photographs, he recently started St Photography in Mandan with his wife Sarah. They live in Mandan with their two children, Gabriel, 3 and Cassia, 1, and a soon-to-be son. He said his greatest achievement is loving the Lord, having a family and being married.

"The greatest thing you can do is help people – that is what makes the greatest impact in the world."