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Note to editor: Quaameeka Saunders is a graduate of Wyandotte High School, [Kansas City, Kan.](#)
Lamees Al-Athari is a native of Baghdad.

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Wednesday, May 9, 2007

EIGHT K-STATE STUDENTS DEEMED 'EXTRAORDINARY' BY STAFF, FACULTY

MANHATTAN — Kansas State University recently honored students who have overcome obstacles to succeed in their educational pursuits.

The 2007 Extraordinary Student Awards were presented at a May 2 banquet to six undergraduate and two graduate students who have continued their college education despite such challenges as physical and learning disabilities, family tragedy, and political and social turmoil.

The students honored with Extraordinary Student Awards for 2007:

Aronka Seaverson, junior in social science, [Kansas City, Kan.](#)

From [Manhattan](#): Lamees Al-Athari, graduate student in English; Margarita Alcantara, senior in secondary education; Suzanne Mayo-Theus, graduate student in family studies; and Quaameeka Saunders, junior in family studies and human services.

Ed Brock, senior in social work, [Morrill](#); and Savannah Jennings, junior in sociology, [Salina](#).

From out of state: Danielle Garrison, senior in interior architecture and product design, [Broomfield, Colo.](#)

"This occasion is not just a celebration of the students, who are so inspirational for their persistence in the face of incredible adversity," said Cia Verschelden, an associate professor who belongs to the planning and selection committees for the awards. "We also acknowledge the faculty and staff at K-State who support and encourage them."

This is the sixth year for the awards. They have been supported by the K-State Faculty Senate, several deans and members of the faculty and staff, said Verschelden, who also directs K-State's office of assessment. For the past three years, the members of the executive board of the Kansas State University Foundation have donated their own money to fund cash awards for the students.

(more)

Verschelden quoted from a letter written by one of the award winners: "I am actually surprised that my professors have nominated me, because it is the people here at K-State who deserve this honor. I have always found in them a listening ear ready to hear my slightest distress. Their encouragement enabled me to get through the toughest times, always guiding me toward the best possible path."

The Extraordinary Student Awards are given out each spring. Anyone in K-State's campus community can nominate a student. The planning and selection is done completely with volunteer work and donated money.

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