

Press Release

**Orange County Education Foundation Awards
Scholarships to Thirteen OCHS Graduates**

June 8, 2012



David Alvarez, pictured with Jonathan Chasen, received the first-ever \$1,000 OCEF general fund scholarship.

As Chairman of the Orange County Education Foundation's (OCEF) Scholarship Committee, Jonathan Chasen drew his customary satisfaction from the organization's award of 13 scholarships with a total value of \$20,750 to members of the Orange County High School (OCHS) Class of 2012. However the June 4 OCHS Senior Awards Night program presented Chasen with reason for even more gratification.

Ebony Brown, a member of the OCHS Class of 2011, awarded three \$100 scholarships to members of the Class of 2012 during the Senior Awards night program. While Brown's scholarships were independent of the Foundation, Chasen still found himself inspired by the young alumna's generosity. "That demonstrates my long-term vision for the OCEF," said Chasen. "Students who

benefit from scholarship programs tend to be our best and brightest. When they go out in the world and become successful, I'd love to see a program of consistent giving back. Ebony just amazed me with the speed of her return on the investment."

Chasen also enjoyed the privilege of awarding the Foundation's first-ever \$1,000 general fund scholarship to David Alvarez. Prior to announcing the award, Chasen told the audience that the OCEF General Fund was created by donations made by Orange County Public School employees through a new payroll deduction program. "The tremendous contributions to the general OCEF scholarship fund truly show how much the educators and administrators care about these students as individuals," said Chasen.

"It means so much to me that the scholarship comes from the teachers (and other staff members)," Alvarez said. "They helped me in so many ways all through the years and now they are helping me reach my goal to be a nurse." This year's other OCEF awards included:

- The **American Woodmark Foundation's Career and Technical Education Achievement Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Katina Bright by Greg Conley. "I want to thank my Mom and my sister for helping me to stick with my education. This scholarship is really a

tribute to them and everything they have done for me,” said Bright. “I plan to continue my education at Longwood University where I want to study anthropology, which I first got interested in through my studies on biology right here at Orange County High School. Thanks to the American Woodmark Scholarship, I’ll be able to reach my education goals and go to college.”

- Three **Anne Saunders Boyer & Julian Flint Boyer Scholarships**, each in the amount of \$3,000, were awarded to Samantha Amos, Kara Carter and Rachel Donaldson by Kim Harris.

“I definitely felt beyond shock when I heard my name called. I wasn’t expecting it,” said Amos. “I know that this will help me immensely. With this scholarship, my first year at University of Mary Washington is covered.”

“I was caught off guard when my name was called for such a large scholarship,” added Carter. “I am thankful I received money that will aid me in paying for my tuition, room and board at James Madison University next year.”

“When I heard my name called, it was such a big surprise,” said

Donaldson. “I’ve been working so hard for scholarships all year. I am so grateful to have all my efforts rewarded in such a powerful way. I want to do my best.”

- The **Harry R. Graham, Jr. Memorial Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Rachel Donaldson by Shirley Graham, the wife of Harry R. Graham. “This scholarship will make pursuing my goals as a college student so much easier for me and so much easier for my family,” said Donaldson. “I can’t say thank you to the Graham family in enough ways.”

“I am pleased that we are able to help someone further her education in some small way,” Mrs. Graham responded.

- The **CJM Kyle Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Grace Newman by Mary Goodwin. “I am so grateful for this honor,” said Newman. “When they called my name, I thought, ‘Oh my goodness this is for me. I got the scholarship.’ This will help me and my family so much. My Mom is so proud too.”

- The **Gordonsville Volunteer Fire Company Auxiliary Scholarship**, in the amount of \$250, was awarded to Alexandra Payne by Tim Ferguson. “My Mom told me to apply for some scholarships. I read about this one and I knew it was for me and then I got it. I was so surprised and so glad,” said Payne. “This scholarship will really help me. I am going to Liberty University to study nursing. I’ll need a lot of science books and they are expensive. The money I got from the scholarship will help me cover that expense and lift a big burden from me and my family.”

- The **Jane Gwyn Robertson Zimmermann Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,500, was awarded to Julia Yurasits by Sam Kessler. “I was so excited. I had no idea I’d be recognized,” said Yurasits. “It means so much to me to be recognized by people who value education. Receiving this scholarship inspires me to do my very best. I can’t begin to say how much this means to me.”

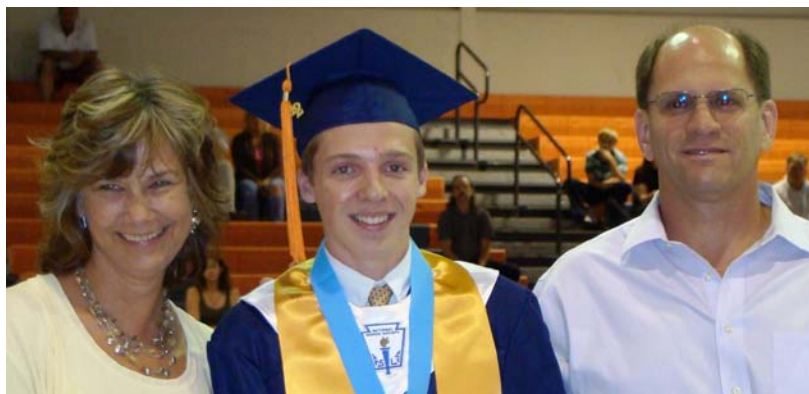
- The **Joe Stanley Memorial Soccer Scholarship**, in the amount of \$3,000, was awarded to Jacob Sanner by Uva and John Stanley.



Photo courtesy of Victor O’Neill Studios

Shirley Graham presented Rachel Donaldson with the Harry R. Graham, Jr. Memorial Scholarship.

"I was honored to be chosen as the recipient of the 2012 Joseph Stanley Memorial Scholarship," said Sanner. "I remember Joe and what he meant to the 2007 OCHS soccer team, and it is very flattering to be thought of as having brought some of those same great qualities to the 2012 team. The scholarship will help me achieve my goals at JMU, which include giving back to the community as the Stanley family has done and continues to do."



Jacob Sanner received the Joe Stanley Memorial Soccer Scholarship presented by Uva and John Stanley.

• **The Nora Pannill Brooking Scholarship**, in the amount of

\$2,000, was awarded to Kourtney Monroe by Bryan Hargett. "I was very surprised when I heard my name called," said Monroe. "Getting the scholarship proved to me that hard work really does pay off. I'm very grateful and thankful for this scholarship. I plan to go to Germanna Community College and I know the scholarship will come in handy for books and Security Plus and Ethical Hacker certifications, all things that I need to be a successful college student."

• **Two Patricia Francis Scholarships**, in the amount of \$500 each, were awarded to Allie Fincham and Brianna Knicely by Sheila Lewis. "I plan to use my scholarship to further my education at Piedmont Virginia Community College and after I finish there, I'll go on to UVA," said Knicely. "This scholarship will help me reach my dream of being a nurse and take some of the burden off my Mother. I am so grateful for this opportunity. It means the world to me and my family."

"When I got the scholarship I was in shock," Fincham added. "I heard the \$2,500 figure mentioned and thought, 'that can't be for me, I am just a regular student.' And then they called my name. I am so grateful and so happy. This money will go straight to tuition at Lynchburg College where I plan to study pre-med. It will really ease the financial burden on me and my family now and in the future. I am so thankful. This Francis scholarship is so important to me."



Allie Fincham (left) and Brianna Knicely (right) are pictured with Sheila Lewis who presented each with Patricia Francis Scholarships.

Members of the OCEF Board agreed that the event affirmed their efforts to build the general fund and to meet the needs of the Foundation's growing number of sponsored awards. "The most rewarding aspect of serving on this Foundation is the gratification of witnessing the reactions of the

students when they reap the rewards of all their hard work," said Hargett, who has served on the Foundation Board since July, 2011.

"I was impressed both by the students' expressions of pride as they were getting their scholarships, as well as by the expressions of those presenting the scholarships," added Ferguson, who has served on the Board since 2010. "To me, that is what it is all about. I am so grateful to have been a part of that."

Over the past five years, the OCEF has awarded 77 scholarships for a total of \$140,000. The Foundation awarded 14 scholarships for a total of \$26,500 in 2011, and 17 scholarships for \$24,500 in 2010. It awarded 16 scholarships for a total of \$26,500 in 2009, and 17 scholarships for \$21,000 in 2008.

The Orange County Education Foundation is a non-profit organization devoted to creating and sustaining opportunities for scholarship and advancement for students and teachers in all Orange County schools. The Foundation was founded in 1994 as a project of the Orange County of Chamber of Commerce. In 1996, it consolidated with the Orange County Public Schools Foundation and became a joint venture of the Chamber and the school division. It seeks to serve students and teachers in Orange County Public Schools, at Germanna Community College, and at Grymes Memorial School.

The Foundation also recently awarded nine Innovation Grants to eight Orange County Public School teachers and one Grymes Memorial School teacher. In the fall of 2011, the Foundation collaborated with the Lake of the Woods Lions Club to provide Innovation Grants to nine Orange County teachers.

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*Further information about the Orange County Education Foundation's Scholarship program may be obtained by contacting **Matt Benefield** at (540) 661-4550, or mbenefield@ocss-va.org.*