



Press Release

Orange County Education Foundation Awards Scholarships to Thirteen OCHS Graduates

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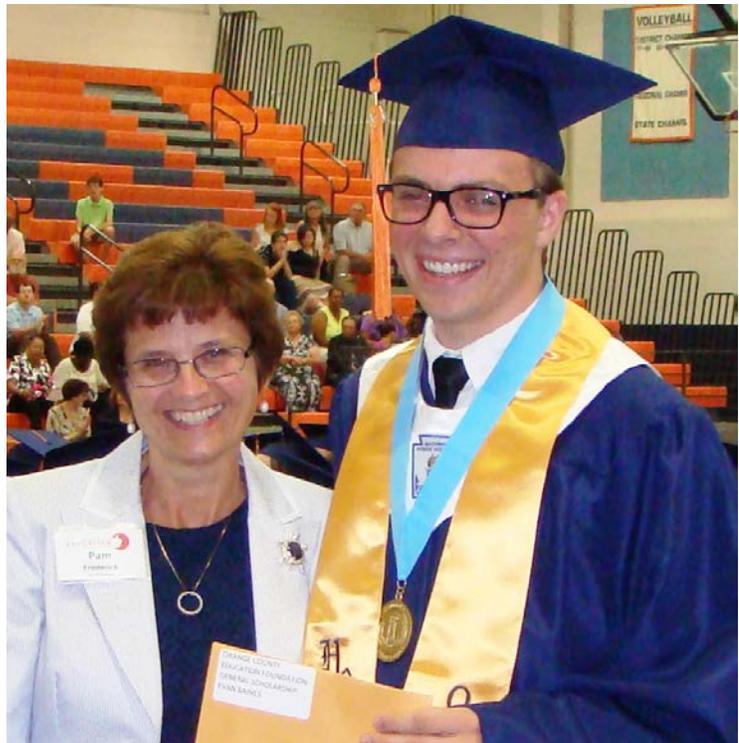
A good year for the Orange County Education Foundation (OCEF) translated into a great year for 13 Orange County High School graduates during their Senior Awards Night program on June 9.

The Foundation awarded 16 scholarships, totaling \$33,000, to 13 different graduates. "This is the highest amount of money that the Foundation has ever awarded during its existence," said OCEF President Bryan Hargett. "I continue to be inspired by the community's rapidly growing support for students and teachers."

The Foundation Awards portion of the Senior Night program was officiated by Sean Gregg, one of the founding members of the OCEF Board who now serves as the Foundation's legal advisor. "The Education Foundation takes great pride in being able to award so many scholarships on Senior Night," said Gregg. "The awards are tangible evidence of Orange County's residents' commitment to develop and nurture its young people, and to assist them as they pursue their academic and professional dreams."

The Foundation's two-year-old **General Fund Scholarship** was awarded to Evan Baines by OCEF Board member Pam Frederick. The General Fund Scholarship has grown from \$1,000 when it was first awarded in 2012 to \$5,000 in each of the past two years.

"I was definitely shocked when they called my name on Senior Night and said that I had received the \$5,000 OCEF General Scholarship. My jaw hit the floor and my eyes grew wide with surprise," said Baines. "I actually lost my breath for a second. I am extremely grateful and blessed to have received it, especially since I have been worried about paying for college. I am attending George Mason University in the fall to study criminology and/or political science. This scholarship will greatly



Evan Baines, pictured with Pam Frederick, OCEF Board member, received the OCEF general fund scholarship.

help me and my family with paying for my education and will relieve a lot of stress we have been feeling.”

This year’s other OCEF awards included:

- Three **Anne Saunders Boyer & Julian Flint Boyer Scholarships**, each in the amount of \$3,000, were awarded to Amber Schaar, Ayana Braxton and Ana Reuss by Martha Roby, OCEF board member.

“I was really shocked at first,” said Schaar. “I didn’t think they really called my name. When I realized it was me, I felt excited and proud and grateful. This money will really help with tuition expenses at Bridgewater

College where I’ll be studying psychology next year. I plan to get a Master’s Degree after I finish at Bridgewater, so this scholarship starts me off in a good way!”

“What a blessing this scholarship is to my family,” said Braxton. “It will help my parents so much! It makes continuing my education easier in lots of ways. I just thank God for this blessing. I’m still a little shocked and so, so grateful.”

“Getting these scholarships is really exciting for me and my parents” added Reuss. “I already have a summer job so with these scholarships I can guarantee that tuition for my first year at Virginia Tech is covered.”

- **The Harry R. Graham, Jr. Memorial Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Carolyn Habib by Shirley Graham, the wife of Harry R. Graham. “I was shocked when I heard my name called,” Habib said. “I am so grateful for the funds. I’ll put them to good use as I study elementary education at Western Carolina University.”

- **The CJM Kyle Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Cecil Tiblin by Martha Nicholson. “I didn’t really know anything about this



Pictured with OCEF Board member Martha Roby are the recipients Anne Saunders Boyer & Julian Boyer Award. Left to right: Ana Reuss, Ayana Braxton, Roby and Amber Schaar.



Carolyn Habib, pictured with Shirley Graham, received the Harry R. Graham, Jr., Memorial Scholarship.



Cecil Tiblin, pictured with Martha Nicholson, received the CJM Kyle Scholarship.

scholarship. I was overwhelmed when I heard them call my name. I am blown away at how generous our community is," Tiblin said. "I appreciate the money and the confidence the scholarship donors have in me. This \$1000 will go straight to my college tuition."

• **The Jane Gwyn Robertson Zimmermann Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,500, was awarded by OCEF Board member Martha Roby to Carolyn Habib. "I definitely didn't know I'd be receiving one scholarship much less two scholarships," Habib said. "I am so excited to start college and grateful for all the support."

• **The Joe Stanley Memorial Soccer Scholarship**, in the amount of \$4,000, was awarded to Jamie Watcher by Uva and John Stanley. "When I heard my name, I felt humbled. I've heard so many stories about Joe Stanley and his skill and dedication to (soccer) and life. He's bigger than life to all of us at OCHS," said Watcher. "You can be sure that I'll put this scholarship to good use as I continue my studies at Christopher Newport University."

• **The Nora Pannill Brooking Scholarship**, in the amount of \$2,000, was awarded by OCEF Board President Bryan Hargett to Tiahna Mack. "This scholarship will help me with tuition and books at Piedmont Community College," Mack said. "I plan to get my Associates Degree there before moving on the Radford University to study nursing."

• **The Patricia Francis Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Tiahna Mack by Sheila Lewis. "I was shocked when they called my name the first time and then when I heard it again I was so excited and so proud," Mack said.

• **The Taylor and Phyllis Grasty Medical Scholarship**, in the amount of \$3,000, was awarded to Marissa Brizzolara by Penny Work, an OCEF



Carolyn Habib, pictured with Martha Roby, received the Jane Gwyn Robertson Zimmermann Scholarship.



Jamie Watcher, pictured with John and Uva Stanley, received the Joe Stanley Memorial Soccer Scholarship.



Tiahna Mack, pictured with Bryan Hargett, received the Nora Pannill Brooking Scholarship.

Board member. "I was surprised in the best way when I heard them call my name," said Brizzolara. "This scholarship made my Senior Night even more special. It is great to be recognized by someone who shares my interest in medicine. This scholarship will help cover my tuition at James Madison University where I plan to study nursing. Senior Night was made even more special for me because, Ms. Work presented the scholarship to me. She was the Head of School when I was in elementary school at Grymes. It was great to see her."

• **The Ann Mason Head Start Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded by Chuck Mason, in honor of his wife, to Mrs. Kim Harris, OCHS Guidance Counselor, who accepted on behalf of Isaiah Ferguson. Mrs. Mason is a distinguished Head Start teacher who has served Orange County Public Schools for the past 21 years.

• **The Barbara Bannar Memorial Scholarship for Business and Entrepreneurial Studies**, in the amount of \$1,000, was awarded to Justin Hurley by Gregg. "Hearing my name called at Senior Night was really nice. I am so happy and so grateful," said Hurley. "It's a real honor to receive the business scholarship in memory of Mrs. Bannar. This will really help with expenses at Penn State."

The Bannar Memorial Scholarship was established in 2013 after Mrs. Bannar lost her long-term battle against cancer. She served as Executive Director of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce from 1991 to 2013. She also served with Gregg as one of the founding members of the OCEF Board in 1994.

Gregg and current OCEF Board member Jonathan Chasen were instrumental in establishing the Bannar Memorial Scholarship. "Barbara was a leading advocate for business in Orange County, from the time the



Tiahna Mack, pictured with Shelia Lewis, received the Patricia Francis Scholarship.



Marissa Brizzolara, pictured with Penny Work, received the Taylor and Phyllis Grasty Medical Scholarship.



Justin Hurley, pictured with Sean Gregg, received the first-ever Barbara Bannar Memorial Scholarship for Business and Entrepreneurial Studies.

Chamber hired her until her death,” said Gregg. “She asked, as one of her last requests, that memorial contributions be made to establish this scholarship. Jonathan Chasen, the immediate Past President of the Chamber at the time, took the initiative and reached out to other Chamber Board Members, past and present to create a fund in perpetuity as a fitting tribute to Barbara. I know that Barbara would be particularly delighted that the scholarship’s first beneficiary, Justin Hurley, is attending college at Penn State University, because Barbara was a native of Pennsylvania.”

- **The Charles L. Haney Scholarships**, in the amount of \$1,500 for a student attending a four-year college, and \$1,000 for a student attending a two-year college, were awarded by Ceresa Haney to Ana Reuss and Philip Miles.

“This will make it much easier for me to enjoy my freshman year at Tech,” said Reuss. “Receiving this scholarship makes everything about college seem so much more manageable. I can’t say thank you in enough ways.”

- **The Town of Orange Scholarship**, in the amount of \$1,000 was awarded to Sam Kessler, Jr. by Chuck Mason, who also serves as Mayor of the Town of Orange. “I was very surprised to hear my name called for the Town of Orange Scholarship,” Kessler said. “It’s truly an honor to be the first recipient of this award. I’ve lived in town my whole life and I love it here. I am proud to say that I’m from Orange. It’s made me the person I am today. This scholarship is very much appreciated. I am so grateful to have these funds available to support my education at Virginia Tech. It’s wonderful to have this kind of support from my hometown. I am so thankful.”

Over the past seven years, the OCEF has awarded 104 scholarships for a total of \$198,500. The Foundation awarded 11 scholarships for a total of \$25,500 in 2013; 13 scholarships for a total of



Ana Reuss, pictured with Ceresa Haney, received the first-ever Charles L. Haney Scholarship. Not pictured: Philip Miles, who also received a Charles L. Haney Scholarship.



Sam Kessler, pictured with Chuck Mason, received the first-ever Town of Orange Scholarship.

\$20,750 in 2012, and 14 scholarships for a total of \$26,500 in 2011. It awarded 17 scholarships for \$24,500 in 2010; 16 scholarships for a total of \$26,500 in 2009; and 17 scholarships for \$21,000 in 2008.

Other OCEF Board members in attendance included Sam Kessler, Pam Frederick, Martha Roby, Penny Work and Bob Grimesey. Ex-officio member and School Board member, Judy Carter, also was in attendance.

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 21 Innovation Grants to teachers at Germanna Community College and in Orange County Public Schools. In the fall of 2013, the Foundation collaborated with the Lake of the Woods Lions Club to provide Innovation Grants to 12 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, Treasurer, at (540) 661-4550, or info@ocedfoundationva.org.