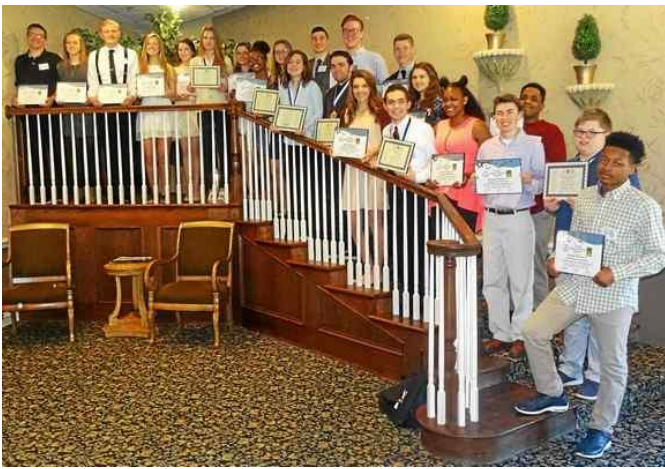


Optimist Clubs honor students and citizens



Youth Appreciation Award recipients and essay and oratorical contest winners were honored at the recent Clinton Township Area Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Breakfast. The students represent Chippewa Valley High School, Clintondale High School, Dakota High School, Fraser High School, L'Anse Creuse High School L'Anse Creuse High School North, Lutheran High School North and Mount Clemens High School. Photo submitted by Carl "Doc" Durlock

By Linda May, For The Macomb Daily
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Nicholas Ellul is the recipient of the 2017 Clinton Township Area Optimist Club Achievement in Education Award. He was a L'Anse Creuse High School teacher and is the K-12 Math and Science Instructional Coach at L'Anse Creuse Public Schools. Photo submitted by Nicholas Ellul

The Clinton Township Area Optimist Club honored nearly two dozen students at its recent 26th annual Youth Appreciation Breakfast.

Two juniors each from Clinton Township high schools received Youth Appreciation Awards, chosen by their school leaders for their optimistic attitude and helpfulness to others. The Optimist club's essay contest and oratorical contest winners were recognized. Students received cash prizes, medallions and framed certificates.

Recipients of the Youth Appreciation Awards were: Alisa Twomey and Braeden Haggarty, Chippewa Valley High School; Imani Adams and Nathaniel Lacey, Clintondale High School; Sydney Buckner and Michael Valente, Dakota High School; McKinzie Davey and Kyle Anichi, Fraser High School; Lauren Howard and Michael Alter, L'Anse Creuse High School; Alexandra Kocher and Sam Asoklis, L'Anse Creuse High School North; Caroline Hardies and Logan Davis, Lutheran High School North; Cataria Weaver and Jaylen Williams, Mount Clemens High School.

The annual essay contest and oratorical contests are Optimist International programs. This year's essay topic was "Chasing Optimism in the Face of Challenges."

The winners were: (first place) Jasmine Zadroga; (second place) Andrew Gable, and (third place) Kaleigh Snoddy. All three students attend L'Anse Creuse High School North.

The oratorical contest, held in March, was on the topic of "What the World Gains from Optimism."

The female winners honored at the breakfast were: (first place) Brianne Lowe, L'Anse Creuse Middle School East, L'Anse Creuse Public Schools; (second place) Alexa Kincaid, Seneca Middle School, Chippewa Valley Schools; (third place) Emily Principe, Dakota High School, Chippewa Valley Schools.

The male winners were (first place) Anthony Russo, Eisenhower High School, Utica Community Schools; (second place) Nathan Strobl, Richards Middle School, Fraser Public Schools; (third place) Logan Branigan, Chippewa Valley High School, Chippewa Valley Schools.

Both first-place winners, Brianne Lowe and Anthony Russo, presented their speeches at the breakfast.

A highlight of the breakfast was the presentation of the Achievement in Education Award to Nicholas Ellul. He was honored for his accomplishments as a L'Anse Creuse High School teacher and K-12 Math and Science Instructional Coach at L'Anse Creuse Public Schools.

To learn more about the Clinton Township Area Optimist Club, please call 586-566-7277.

The Optimist Club of St. Clair Shores recently celebrated its 19th annual Champions Banquet, recognizing seven outstanding citizens.

The club also presented \$12,000 in scholarships and art awards to graduating students from Lakeview, Lake Shore, South Lake and North Lake High Schools.

"The Optimist club is always looking for a true champion, someone who gives of himself or herself to help others," club president Debbie DePape said. "The club received write-ups on numerous nominees who have spent countless hours volunteering their time to help others, especially children. We are proud to present this year's champions who reflect what a true champion is by setting an example for the kids and our community.

"The Champions Banquet is one of our signature events and showcases all the great things our students and community members are doing for our city," DePape said.

The scholarship recipients plan to pursue their education at a college, university or trade school. Eight students – two from each district including North Lake High School – were awarded \$1,500 each in scholarship money.

The club recognized students who placed first through third place in the Lac Ste. Claire Art Fair from each high school, and made its fifth annual Youth Leadership Award to Kennedy Middle School eighth-grader Callen Fields.

"Callen is an exemplary young man," DePape said. "Through his involvement in sports, he is known for his compassion with students with special needs. Parents have thanked him for his influence and kindness that he has shown their children."

He volunteers at many events and plays guitar at St. Margaret of Scotland church functions.

"He is an accomplished musician playing saxophone, bass guitar, guitar and piano," DePape said. "He was asked to put a small group of band members together. He sought out fellow students and musicians that he felt would benefit from the experience. He welcomed the challenge. He is also an excellent scholar and often volunteers his time to assist other students, encouraging them to do their best. Callen has already made a difference in his community and has displayed leadership skills.

“The club is proud to recognize two very talented South Lake High School students – senior Katy VanRheen and junior Sean Beaupre,” DePape said. “Both students were Scholastic Art and Writing Gold Key Winners. To have two students from the same city and same school to be in this pool of talent is an incredible achievement and a first for South Lake High School,” DePape said.

St. Clair Shores city official Ron Frederick was recognized for service as a baseball coach, fund-raiser for children’s projects, and volunteer for multiple city charities and projects.

“One of his favorite programs came after his brother, Don, passed away in 2004,” DePape said. “Don spent 37 years at South Lake Schools, most of that time as athletic director. Ron established the Don Frederick Memorial Scholarship Fund.

“Party in a Box provides all of the funding for the scholarships. That is Ron’s affectionate name for the trailer that hauls all the tents, tables, chairs, coolers, garbage cans for parties. He is very busy at graduation time. He lends city residents and businesses the tables, tents, and chairs and only asks that they make a donation of some sort to the scholarship fund. All of the funds collected go to the graduates. A scholarship winner must be an athlete and maintain good grades, and has to work very hard to make the team. They are not the star of the team but someone who plays with all their heart and with a positive attitude,” DePape said.

More than \$35,000 in 70 scholarships has gone to the city’s high school seniors because of the project.

Honorees Lisa Beckman and Sarah Bowman, Jefferson Middle School teachers, created the JMS Giving Garden at their school.

“During the winter of 2012, the Project Science Class started planting vegetables in a hydroponic greenhouse outside the building while starting seedlings in their classroom,” DePape said. “Once weather permitted, the students began planting their garden in garden boxes.”

“Students have learned about cultivation and have successfully grown basil, tomatoes, yellow, orange and red peppers, zucchini and various squash, green beans and melons. The students, who work throughout the summer tending the garden, work in collaboration with the Optimist Club of St. Clair Shores, setting up a weekly vegetable stand called the ‘Giving Garden’ which is open to the community offering free vegetables and fruit. Hundreds of people have taken advantage of this experience over the past five years and are already looking forward to this season’s crops,” she said.

Justine Ventimiglia and Kristie Penn have served as officers of the Elmwood Elementary PTO for several years. They wrote a successful \$5,000 grant for Lowe’s Community Courtyard at the school and worked with local landscaping businesses to complete it. They facilitated a walk-a-thon that raised \$15,000 and got a grant for 20 new Kindle Readers for the school’s Walk to Read program.

“These achievements, among numerous evening activities for families and funding field trips, and the annual end-of-year Family Fun Fest show how a collaborative team can achieve much when working together,” DePape said.

For more information about the St. Clair Shores Optimist Club, contact DePape at 586-291-1271.

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