

The Post-Star presents the **2023**
TEEN•excel•lence

**INNOVATION COMMUNITY
LEADERSHIP**



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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to The Post-Star 2023 Teen Excellence Honorees. We are so proud to honor and recognize these 22 local high school students. These teens all demonstrate exceptional leadership skills, academic success, and a commitment to their community.

While these honorees have unique goals and accomplishments, they all share the determination to make a difference in their community.

In this section we'll introduce the 2023 Teen Excellence Honorees and highlight their many achievements and the many ways they've found to contribute to our communities, schools, churches.

We all benefit from their efforts to make a difference.

Please join us in congratulating the 2023 Teen Excellence Honorees.

We want to also thank our 2023 Teen Excellence sponsors, Nemer Motor Group and SUNY Adirondack. With their generous support, we are able to celebrate and honor these students in our community.

Michelle Rice
President, Northeast SBU
Glens Falls | Auburn | Carlisle, PA | Atlantic City, NJ



Students demonstrating personal growth, leadership and innovation along with commitment to the community were selected by a committee comprised of Francis Coccozza, Brian Corcoran, and Robert Nemer.
Honoree Introductions written by freelancer, Andrea Palmer.

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Age: 17**Parents/Guardians Names:** Miguel Arcila and Jeannie Marrero**Siblings:** Josias Arcila**Grade Level:** 12

Nicole Arcila – North Warren Central School

Personal Inspiration: My inspiration comes from the people around me. As an artist I have always been an observer. I am constantly inspired by the resilience of the human spirit. I have witnessed people go through some of the most heartbreaking situations and they come out stronger. I've seen people lose everything and maintain a smile on their face. That is what inspires me every day.

Hobbies: My Hobbies include, Playing soccer, drawing, painting, making jewelry, going on runs, watching movies and reading.

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment is getting into my dream school, The School of Visual Arts, in NYC. Art has been a passion of mine since I was very little. I have been so blessed to have had a family who supported and encouraged me in my art journey. I remember being 8 years old drawing in my sketchbook and getting frustrated because my drawings didn't quite look like I wanted them to. Now I get emotional thinking of my 8 year old self and how she'd be amazed and over the moon to know that we've accomplished one of our dreams.

School Activities: I am involved with

multiple clubs and activities within my school. I have played soccer for six years and I was blessed with being captain three times. I'm a natural helper, I'm in the SADD club, and the yearbook club.

Community Service: A lot of my community service is intertwined with my school activities. For the SADD club we participated in sticker shock which is where we go around town to gas stations and local businesses to put stickers on alcoholic beverages. The stickers say SADD club and warn business owners as well as customers to not buy or sell these products to underage people. For Natural Helpers we got together for a highway clean up and went around picking up trash from the sides of the road in my community.

Person you look up to and why: A person I look up to is my Abuelita. My Abuelita is the strongest woman I know. Her childhood was not easy. She started school much later than people her age. Despite this challenge she graduated and became a nurse. She has taught me the strength in being a woman, kindness and humility. She welcomes everyone making sure they have a hot plate of food and a safe place to stay. Even

now that she's older and has had multiple medical procedures she radiates energy and warmth. My heart fills with pride when people tell me I have her spirit

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: My Health teacher Mrs. Varsames has always been there for me. In the classroom she encouraged me to keep on going with my math homework knowing it was the subject I struggled with the most. She pushed me to do my best and expand my learning. Outside of learning she always listened to anything I was worried or anxious about. She encouraged me and reminded me when I needed to take a break. I will never forget her kindness.

Activities outside of school: Outside of school I babysit, work as a waitress at the Riden-Hy Ranch, and I also do artwork commissions.

Favorite pastime: My favorite pastime is reading. I could spend hours just listening to music and reading a good book.

Favorite book: My favorite book is Fighting Words by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley.



© D Parker Photography

Age: 17**Parents/Guardians Names:** Jonelle Bacon, Larry Bacon**Siblings:** Kara Bacon, Cody Bacon**Grade Level:** 12

Kailey Bacon – Warrensburg Jr.-Sr. High School

Personal Inspiration: My personal inspiration for each day is my parents. My parents are the hardest working people I know, and they have worked to give my siblings and me everything we have now.

Hobbies: I spend most of my time playing sports such as softball, basketball, and soccer. I also enjoy spending time with family and friends.

Biggest Accomplishment : My biggest accomplishment is receiving an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

School Activities: I am a three sport varsity athlete at Warrensburg, and I participate in softball, soccer, and basketball. I am involved in various clubs such as National Honor Society, Varsity Club, and SADD, and currently am involved in the New Visions Health Careers Exploration Program.

Community Service: I have been involved in various community service projects through NHS such as Project Cameron's Story and have volunteered through American Red Cross, as well as volunteered as a Peer Tutor at Warrensburg

my Junior year. I also coordinated and led a 5K to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project this past summer.

Person you look up to and why: I look up to my best friend, Tommy. He is one of the smartest people I have ever met and through his own experiences inspires me to work hard to achieve my goals. Each day I aim to be as kind and selfless as he is.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: One teacher who has made a positive impact on me was my high school biology and AP Bio teacher, Mrs. Jamie Sesselman. Mrs. Sesselman truly cares about her students and how well they do in her class, allowing abundant opportunities to learn the material. Many of Mrs. Sesselman's students have been inspired to pursue further education in biology, myself included.

Activities outside of school: My activities outside of school include playing travel softball, summer sports, and hanging out with my friends and family.

Favorite pastime: Playing sports.

Favorite food: Chicken Parmigiana

Favorite movie: Top Gun

Favorite music/artist: Taylor Swift, Zach Bryan

Favorite book: To Kill a Mockingbird

Goals, dreams & aspirations: Next year I will be attending the United States Military Academy, where I will major in Life Sciences. Following graduation and commissioning as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, I plan on attending medical school, after which I hope to serve as a Physician.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Linda Burch, Brian Burch

Siblings: Jake Burch, Josh Burch, Luke Burch

Grade Level: 12

Gabriel Burch – Argyle Central School

Personal Inspiration: My Parents (Brian and Linda) have had the greatest impact on my life including influencing what I strive to become in my community and life.

Hobbies: Soccer, Trap shooting, Tennis, Snowboarding, Tenor Saxophone, attempting to learn various instruments, participating in the FFA, Hunting, and reading, currently reading Robert Greenes' "The Laws of Human Nature".

Biggest Accomplishment: My largest accomplishment in my opinion is competing at the "Big E" and winning third place in the individual competition after competing in the FFA NYS competition.

School Activities: I am an active member/participant in clubs such as the FFA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Argyle Band, I Ski Club, National Honor Society, Trap club, and Varsity Soccer and Tennis team.

Community Service: I actively volunteer at the Argyle Fire Department and the Argyle Presbyterian Church where I am a part of the AV team. And when the Argyle food pantry needs volunteers I am sure to be there.

Person you look up to and why: One of

my inspirations and one of my most highly regarded influences is psychologist and author, Jordan Peterson, his works have allowed me to work on myself as a person.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Mrs. Baier has always made time for me, always encouraging me to work harder and devote more time to my studies. She always has patience for when I bug her during random ninth periods and ask her complicated physics questions.

Activities outside of school: I love to participate in Young Life events, and outside of organizations I like to go hunting, hiking and reading.

Favorite pastime: Honestly, I enjoy working out and jogging specifically with music, it's like meditation and gives me time to think.

Favorite food: Buffalo Chicken dip

Favorite movie: John Wick series

Favorite music/artist: Rare Americans

Favorite book: Robert Greene's "The Laws of Human Nature"

Goals, dreams & aspirations: I am enrolled in Clarkson's 2027 class I hope to double major in mechanical, and electrical engineering and one day start my own engineering firm and restore a 1969 Mustang Boss 429 as a hobby.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Kelly Bush, Ray Bush

Siblings: Brother, Sister

Grade Level: 12

Eric Bush – Newcomb Central School

Personal Inspiration: If you put in the work, good things will come out in the end.

Hobbies: Fishing, Dirt bike riding, four-wheeling, hockey, soccer, and basketball.

Biggest Accomplishment: This award.

School Activities: Boys Varsity Soccer, Boys Varsity Basketball

Community Service: Shoveled snow in the winter for older people in town

Person you look up to and why: Ray Bush because he knows how to basically fix anything and is always helping someone out.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Mrs. Gagnon because she has inspired me to do better in school and make the right choices.

Activities outside of school: Newcomb Volunteer Jr. Firefighter, Newcomb EMS Ambulance Driver

Favorite pastime: Hockey

Favorite food: Pizza and Chicken Wings

Favorite movie: Happy Gilmore

Favorite music/artist: Morgan Wallen and Luke Combs

Goals, dreams & aspirations: Get my CDL

What others say about Eric...

"Eric should be commended on countless levels. He has an uncommon skill of establishing and nurturing meaningful relationships with the administration, faculty, staff and student body within our community at large. This is easily illustrated in Eric's roles as a junior firefighter with the Newcomb Fire Department, as well as his involvement as a member of the Newcomb Rescue Squad. He is a First Responder – EMS Driver. Realizing a need to support individuals in our small, rural community, Eric secured his CPR and AED certifications. He is always ready and willing to help those in need," said Christian Fisher, Superintendent of Schools for the Newcomb Central School District.

Activities: Eric is currently enrolled in the Heavy Equipment Program at WSWHE Boces Southern Adirondack Education Center. His desire and excitement for the program is evident as seen by the improvement in his grades, and his motivation to successfully complete his

programming.

Eric is a well-rounded individual. He is a member of the Boys Varsity Soccer team and the Boys Varsity Basketball team at Newcomb. Eric regularly participates in school events and volunteer opportunities in the community.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Bridget and Kevin Crossman

Siblings: Ella and Finley Crossman

Grade Level: 12

Hazel Crossman – South Glens Falls High School

Personal Inspiration: In my life I have been most inspired by members of my family. Family has always been a vital part of the culture of my household. Coming from a relatively large family there is a constant flow of success. Hearing about how people I love and their positive impact on the world makes me so proud. That feeling of pride inspires me to achieve impressive actions as I want them to be proud of me as well!

Hobbies: Playing piano, making arts and crafts, hanging out with family, reading, working on jigsaw puzzles, and listening to podcasts

Biggest Accomplishment: To me, my biggest accomplishment has always been staying true to my morals. Growing up has lots of pressure, especially when you are already a high-achiever yourself. There are constant expectations and it can take a toll on your mental health and many choose to make poor decisions or act in ways that don't stay true to their values. Whenever I am in a tough situation I always go back to those core beliefs I hold. If a choice doesn't align with kindness, integrity, respect, and positive impact, I chose not to make it or find a better option.

School Activities: I am a member of

National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Math League, Yearbook Club, Save the Children Action Network, Class Officers (I am class president), and South High Marathon Dance (I am a chairperson). I also play Varsity Tennis and in years past have played lacrosse and field hockey.

Community Service: I have bell rung for the Salvation Army around the holidays, contributed time at local food pantries, worked our school's concession stands at sporting events, volunteered at the Moreau Community Center, handed out exit polls at budget votes, volunteered at races such as the Lake George Triathlon, and more. I am also continuously helping my mom with her not-for-profit B.O.O.K.S. (Books Offer Opportunities, Kids Succeed).

Person you look up to and why: I look up to two of my friends, who are both former Post-Star Teen Excellence winners, Natalie Barden and Mia Cooper. Both Natalie and Mia have embraced me despite the three year age difference. Mia and Natalie have many amazing qualities. They are some of the most caring people I know. They have both helped me through many tough times. When I think about what I want to be when I'm older, I look

to them. Their compassion never fails and the passion they have to better the world inspires me on a daily basis.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Throughout my education I have had many teachers impact me! One teacher that stands out to me is Mrs. Samantha Melucci, my eighth grade social studies teacher. She helped me deal with issues I was dealing with internally and made me truly feel like there always is a path of hope. She helped me realize that there is a place for me in this world. Other teachers I would like to highlight are Mrs. Heather Davies, Mrs. Alissa McDonald, Mrs. Olivia Sutton, Mr. Kristian Keller, Mrs. Sarah Anderson, Ms. Caitlin Hogan, Mrs. Jaime Thompson, and Mrs. Missy Smith.

Activities outside of school: My siblings and I run and operate a game rental business called Rent 'em Games. I also work at a fabulous toy store in downtown Saratoga, G. Williker's. I have been involved in several advocacy groups like Students Demand Action and State of the Students. I am constantly fighting for social change as well!

Favorite pastime: Taking naps with my dog.



Age: 18

Parents/Guardians Names: Mark and Amber Del Signore

Siblings: Twin Sisters, Peyton and Jensen

Grade Level: 12

Sophie Del Signore - Bolton Central School / WSWHE BOCES

Personal Inspiration: My personal inspiration is cosmetology. My passion for this future career path is what increases my work ethic and pushes me to succeed.

Hobbies: Dance and Golf

Biggest Accomplishment: My ability to maintain high grades while taking classes at SUNY Adirondack alongside my Career and Technical Education in the Cosmetology program.

School Activities: Boys Varsity Golf and Drama Club

Community Service: Clothing Drive guest greeter and attendance tracker, Fill the Bus volunteer, Faith Formation Instructor and Church Lector.

Person you look up to and why: The person I look up to is my late great grandmother, Eleanor Del Signore. She recently passed at the age of ninety-nine and from the moment I was born, she was always there for me. She was strong in her faith and her work ethic. I hope to emulate that in my life.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: The teacher

that nominated me for this award, Mrs. Bruno, has impacted my life greatly. She has pushed me to succeed even when I think there is no room for improvement. She teaches beyond the skills of cosmetology. She teaches us what we need to succeed as humans. For that I will forever be grateful.

Activities outside of school: I have been dancing since the age of two. This is my sixteenth year of ballet and tenth year of hip-hop.

Favorite pastime: Working on my cosmetology mannequin, practicing formal styling and cutting techniques.

Favorite food: Chicken tenders

Favorite movie: Tangled

Favorite music/artist: Stray Kids

Favorite book: "The Mosquito" by Timothy C. Winegard

Goals, dreams & aspirations: My goal is to get into the Disney College Program. I dream of getting my cosmetology license and owning my own salon.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Steven Hammond and Amanda Hammond

Siblings: Andon, Luke, and Lily.

Grade Level: 12

Emma Hammond - Hudson Falls High School

Personal Inspiration: My personal inspiration is to create a life that I want to be happy and successful in. I work hard in school so I can be successful in my future. This drives me to do my best on everything that I do and if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out. Not everything is meant to work out for you and that's okay, you grow and learn from it.

Hobbies: I enjoy playing the violin, reading books and baking.

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment is growing as a person and experiencing so many things in my life. I'm grateful for every year I grow old and with that year I'm grateful that I keep growing out of my comfort zone. It might be a silly accomplishment to have, but it was a big accomplishment for me to get out of my comfort zone for so many things. From getting out of my comfort zone I get to be myself and I can try new and exciting experiences.

School Activities: I participate in chamber orchestra, Student Council, National Honors Society. I am the first violin in chamber orchestra and I am president of

the Student Council. During the Holidays I paint the windows inside the school to bring up the Holiday spirit.

Community Service: I have volunteered for the Student Councils annual Thanksgiving Basket Initiative and the Say yes to the dress event. In National Honors Society I have volunteered to decorate our local park called "Juckett Park" for Christmas, and baking apple pies for the Thanksgiving Basket Initiative. Face painting for little kids at a soccer tournament, Red Cross Blood Drive, Adopt A Soldier, and working at concession stands for our home games. During the summer I volunteered at patroon land farm planting food, so it could be donated to the American food bank.

Person you look up to and why: I look up to four people in my life, my Mom, my Aunt, my Nana and my best friend. All of them have influenced me in my life and have helped me with so much, from giving me advice to helping me decide my career path. They are always there for me and I can always count on them. They are strong independent women that have built a life for

themselves and have carved a path for me to navigate this world. They've taken risks and have always been true to themselves and others. I always know that they're only a call away.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: The teacher who has impacted my life inside and outside of the school is Mrs. Shea. She has always had the best interest in my future and has given me so many opportunities so I can excel as a person and as a student. Because of her I have grown to engage in leadership roles inside and outside of school and that has helped me succeed as a person.

Activities outside of school:

My favorite activities outside of school are hanging out with my best friend, going to Barnes & Noble, watching movies, listening to music, shopping and being with my siblings.

Favorite pastime: My favorite pastimes are listening to music, reading, playing video games and hanging out with my best friend.



Age: 18

Parents/Guardians Names: Meg Hegener and Dan Hegener

Siblings: Lauren Hegener - 21

Grade Level: 12

Clare Hegener - Saratoga Springs High School

Personal Inspiration: In fourth grade, I did a biography day project on Maya Angelou and instantly felt inspired by her story and her passion for creating positive change. As I learned all about her life, I found the way that she was able to accomplish so much despite all the obstacles she faced remarkable. I love how she used her words as her biggest power, and I spent years reading her books. She sparked my inspiration to do good in the world and leave a lasting impact.

Hobbies: I have recently developed a love of thrift shopping. It is fun to hunt down good deals and try out different stores. It is also nice to know I am making a small, but positive, impact on the environment. I also love to spend time with my friends going out to get food or just hanging out together. My longest hobby has been Irish Dancing which I have done for 13 years and am looking forward to my last St. Patrick's day dancing before heading off to college.

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment is getting into the University of Miami this December. Since the summer after my first year of high school I have loved the school and all the opportunities it can offer me. I have talked

about it obsessively and worked extremely hard to make myself a good candidate. It was such a relief to find out I had gotten in and that I could go to school there in the fall.

School Activities: My biggest role at the high school is being President of the Class of 2023. I work alongside our amazing advisors and four other officers to plan fundraisers and assist the Student Council in school spirit. We are working hard at planning the Senior Ball and making it an event you cannot miss. I also am a student representative on the Building Equity Leadership Team which meets monthly to discuss how to make our school a more equitable and positive environment.

Community Service: I love to perform, and I am lucky enough to be in two groups that do performances throughout our community. The Wild Irish acres dancers are an Irish dance group that I am a part of that travels around to different retirement homes, schools, and local businesses. The Saratoga Choraliers is a choir at the high school that also does performances around the area. I love watching people get excited when we perform.

Person you look up to and why: I have always admired my Grandparents, Pat, and Bill Rabbitt. They are kind, remarkable people who have never failed to make me feel special and loved. My Grandfather has traveled the world and growing up his stories are what gave me a passion for traveling. He has seen and experienced some of the craziest things and I would be lucky to be as smart and worldly as him one day. I aspire to have my grandparent's joy and generosity; they are two people that my world would not revolve without.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Mrs. Louis is the type of teacher that wants to encourage kids to be themselves. In her health class, she talked about difficult topics like addiction, abuse, and mental health. She made her classroom feel warm and welcoming and I have watched many kids go to her when they are struggling. She is the class advisor for the Class of 2023 so over the past two years we have spent a lot of time together working on fundraisers, events and planning two proms. She has been such an amazing person to work with and has helped me so much as I navigate high school.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: June and Scott Jeckel

Siblings: Sam and Nick Jeckel

Grade Level: 12

Andrew Jeckel - Lake George Jr. - Sr. High School

Personal Inspiration: One of my personal inspirations is knowing where I could be in the future. This motivates me to continuing pushing through not only accomplishing goals but to exceed them. Often times its discipline that keeps you going when things get hard and that's all part of becoming successful.

Hobbies: Aviation enthusiast, Volunteer Firefighter

Biggest Accomplishment: Soloing in a Cessna 172p 1/5/22 and Passing my Private Pilot Written Exam

School Activities: I've played football all 6 of my years in High school being a part of the first year section 2 Class C Champs WB/LG/NW Wolverines.

Community Service: For the past 2 years I have been volunteering at North Queensbury Fire Department. It's a great environment to be around, meeting lots of people and creating networks full of great people who care about the community

Person you look up to and why: One person I look up to and is a huge inspiration to me is my cousin Robbie who's a F18 pilot for the US Navy. He obtained his PPL when

he was 17 and I aspire to be the same.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: All my

teachers have positively impacted my life but my business teacher Mrs. Hoffman has defiantly impacted my life inside and outside of the classroom. Not only has she helped me understand how to be a good student and learn but become a person who understands adult life and the responsibilities that come with growing up. To be completely honest words can't describe it because it wasn't just one moment that she had helped me grasp an idea. It was many conversations during free periods, talks after school, talks about the future, talks about building wealth, the key factors and core values of becoming a successful person in life and where/how to apply them. I didn't just learn how to become a businessman; I'm learning how to become a young man who understands the real world and how it works.

Activities outside of school: Volunteer Fire Fighter, Student pilot, lifting, Skiing, hiking

Favorite pastime: The past is the past,

it's great to look back at where you started and remember where you came from but as far as I am concerned the future is all I can focus on.

Favorite food: Steak fillets or Roasts

Favorite movie: Hit Mans Body Guard

Goals, dreams & aspirations: One of my goals is one day working for NetJets



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Brian and Colleen Jennings

Siblings: William Jennings

Grade Level: 12

Kerri Jennings - Granville Jr. - Sr. High School

Personal Inspiration:

I was raised to never do anything halfway. So everything I do, I do to the best of my abilities and try to be the best at. I hope to be a person that others look up to and are inspired by. I want to influence a positive change in the lives of those around me.

Hobbies: Photography, Singing, Running, Raising Turkeys, Going to Concerts, Fishing, Kayaking

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment was getting to serve as the NYS FFA District 3 President my junior year. I was able to interact with FFA members all across NY and collaborate on leadership and agricultural influence. I was able to create and facilitate opportunities for growth for members in my chapter and district.

School Activities: Spirit Club President, Horde Center, FFA Chapter President, Class of 2023 Co-Treasurer, Student Council President, Unified Basketball Assistant, Varsity Volleyball, Varsity Basketball, Varsity Football Cheer, Varsity Tennis, Varsity Outdoor Track. In past years I was also a member of the Varsity Soccer team and Prom Committee

Community Service: The community

service activities I most commonly participate in involve doing stats, book and/or concession stands for athletic events. I've had the opportunity to help with some really fun events like the telescope 100th anniversary party and the cake booth at the Wells Carnival. During covid, I would record a read aloud every month for 2nd graders and create activities to go with them. I also taught an after school program for 5th and 6th graders where once a month we would discuss a new agricultural topic.

Person you look up to and why: One person that I'll look up to forever is my dad. He has such a big heart and cares so much. He works incredibly hard and puts our family before anything. He built our whole house by hand. He'll wait for me no matter how late I come home and start my car on cold mornings before school. My dad has coached just about every sport Granville has to offer, girls and boys. And while to the rest of the town he may be BJ or Coach Jennings, he'll always be Dad to me.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Mrs. Cahan is my agriculture teacher and has impacted my life so much. She pushes me to be the best

version of myself and sees potential in me that I don't. I've spent so much time with her that I'm often referred to as her third child. I've spent most of my summers for the past 3 years working on her farm helping to care for, train and breed her Arabian horses. Mrs. Cahan has the biggest heart and has exerted such a positive influence on so many students.

Activities outside of school: Outside of school, I spend a lot of time with my family and friends. I raise animals such as pigs, turkeys and chickens. You can sometimes catch me at Rising Sun Farm working with the horses. When the weather's nice I like to spend most of my time outdoors doing things like riding my four wheeler, fishing, playing sports in the yard, and many other activities.

Goals, dreams & aspirations: Someday I hope to be working in a school either as an elementary teacher or an athletic trainer. In addition to that, I'd like to be the coach of a winning varsity basketball team. I hope to have a little hobby farm with horses and cows and four big dogs. I also want to travel and see the rest of the country and the world. Somewhere along the way I'll go to some awesome concerts and just soak up all that life has to offer.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Karen and Kevin Jones

Siblings: Abby-11. RJ-19

Grade Level: 12

Aidan Jones - Greenwich Jr.-Sr. High School

Personal Inspiration: I have a lot of people that have inspired me throughout school, and famous idols I've looked up to, but right now my biggest inspiration is my Grammy. She's the toughest warrior in the family, surviving cancer, and fighting through many other medical complications lately. She is the most resilient person I've ever met, and the most forgiving as well. Despite hard struggles, she's always found a way to stay in touch with me and my busy schedule, and I'm forever thankful.

Hobbies: Off-season Olympic Wrestling styles, football, baseball, weightlifting, playing music, hiking, going to concerts

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment was being selected for the NYSSMA All State Symphonic Band, and being placed as the First Horn, 4th chair in the entire state.

School Activities: Class Vice President, National Honor Society Secretary, student in New Visions Health program, Varsity Football - Section 2 First Team All Star. Varsity Wrestling - 3x Captain, 5x Starter Varsity Baseball, Band - first chair French Horn, Jazz Band - trumpet

Community Service: Member of the Boy Scouts, and its honor society the Order of the Arrow. Volunteer firefighter with Greenwich Fire Department. Taught over 50 hours of free piano lessons. Volunteer with youth wrestling team, annual food drive with NHS

Person you look up to and why: I look up to many people, famous athletes and adults in my life, but one person that I specifically look up to for tremendous perseverance and excellence is one of my piano teachers Tony Lu. Tony was born totally blind in China, and had to leave China and come to America at age 16. He's an incredible pianist, incredible piano teacher and has taught me so much not only in music, but in life lessons. Tony triple majored in college, and I look up to him for his tremendous perseverance through extreme hardship and his excellence in all fields.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Ms. Jessica Lourie has impacted my life greatly inside school, always pushing me to do my best. She went out of her way outside of school

to tutor me, even when it was not her class. Mrs. Catherine Pandori has also greatly impacted my life, specifically outside of the classroom always pushing me to achieve greatness in different honor bands around the state. She's had the most faith in me than any other teacher, and always gave me a safe place in school to be creative and relax.

Activities outside of school: Off-season club wrestling, play piano at church, member of Boy Scouts - prospecting Eagle Scout, lifeguard at Skidmore College

Favorite pastime: Spending time in the beautiful nature of Vermont or working out at the YMCA.

Favorite food: Sushi

Favorite movie: Shutter Island

Favorite music/artist: Tyler the Creator

Favorite book: The Godfather by Mario Puzo

Goals, dreams & aspirations: Acceptance into the United States Air Force Academy, wrestling collegiately, graduating medical school



Age: 18

Parents/Guardians Names: Erwin and Rebecca Morris

Siblings: Colin Morris

Grade Level: 12

Julia Morris - Johnsbury Central School

Personal Inspiration: My personal inspirations are reaching my goals and growing into the best version of myself that I can be. I am also inspired by helping others, as it uplifts both me and others.

Hobbies: My hobbies include soccer, skiing, dancing, hiking, kayaking, reading, listening to music, and being outdoors.

Biggest Accomplishment: I would say my biggest accomplishment is being valedictorian of my school for the Class of 2023. This is my biggest accomplishment because I have put a lot of effort into my education throughout the years, as well as in my extracurricular activities and job, yet was able to manage everything and still be successful.

School Activities: Varsity Soccer (Captain), Varsity Softball, Senior National Honor Society (President), Natural Helpers, Student Council (President), Stage Band (Secretary), Pop Singers, Senior Band, Senior Chorus, Varsity Club (Treasurer), Flag Corps, Youth and Government, Earth Club, Foreign Language Club, NYSSMA, All-County Jazz Band, All-County Senior Band, Operation Santa, and Class President.

Community Service: I have participated in a number of acts of Community Service

through the Junior and Senior National Honor Society, as well as Earth Club. I have also volunteered to help read to students and tutor those who need help, as well as help teachers in their classrooms.

Person you look up to and why: The people I look up to most are my parents because they have given me the opportunities to explore and grow into the best version of myself. They have taught me how to advocate and fight for myself and others.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Mr. Matthew Wells is a teacher who has positively impacted my life inside and outside the classroom. In the classroom, Mr. Wells is a thought-provoking, engaging teacher that effectively teaches any Social Studies course. Outside the classroom, Mr. Wells is very considerate and caring, always making myself and other students feel safe, happy, and cherished. Mr. Wells does not hesitate to help me or my peers in any way that he can; writing recommendation letters, offering help with assignments, and always asking each student about their days, lives, and anything they are involved in. Mr. Wells has always made me feel comfortable and important, as he values everybody the same

and never forgets about what each student is involved in outside of school, he always asks and makes conversation.

Activities outside of school: Dance, waitressing, and bussing are my commitments outside of school each week.

Favorite pastime:

My favorite pastimes are being outdoors, reading books, and spending time with family and friends.

Favorite food: Some of my favorite foods are pasta and fruit.

Favorite movie: My favorite movies are the Divergent series, the Hunger Games series, the Harry Potter series, and Erin Brockovich.

Favorite music/artist: My favorite music artists are currently Harry Styles, The Lumineers, and Hozier.

Favorite book: My favorite books are The Hate U Give, Dear Evan Hansen, the Harry Potter series, the Divergent trilogy, and the Hunger Games series.

Goals, dreams & aspirations: My biggest goals and dreams are to live a happy, stable life. I desire to follow my passions and find a secure job that allows me to live my best life, as well as travel and explore the world.



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Age: 18**Parents/Guardians Names:** Karen and Tim Northrop**Siblings:** Conor Northrop**Grade Level:** 12

Morrison Northrop - Glens Falls High School

Personal Inspiration: My personal inspiration is one that I share with many, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Along with being an inspiration she has also become a good luck symbol for me. I wear RGB socks to every important test as a reminder to look for answers that might not always be obvious. But other than just the “luck” she brings, RGB also inspires me through her past actions. She spoke her mind. I aspire to be able to have that much confidence to speak my mind like she did.

Hobbies: I love to ski, rock climb at a local gym, do puzzles with my friend, bake all kinds of desserts, and make pottery.

Biggest Accomplishment: Something that makes me feel accomplished is my collection of books. I have a mini library of 80 books and I have read each and every word that they contain. Having all of my books surround me in my room makes me feel like I have completed something, that I have done something in my life. It might not be important but it is something that I have accomplished and only being 18 I hope that my greatest accomplishment is yet to come.

School Activities: I play soccer and lacrosse. I am in NHS, social justice club, international club and yearbook club. I

have also just become a part of the tutoring program that just started in our school.

Community Service: Through NHS and International club I am able to be a part of volunteer opportunities for The Salvation Army, Ben Osborn Organization and school oriented volunteering. I also had the opportunity through the Social Justice Club to organize a school wide fundraiser for Ukraine.

Person you look up to and why: I look up to just about everyone mostly because I am only 5'3. But also because every person that I know has their own unique trait that I wish to replicate. It might be their kindness, humor, intelligence, dependability or simply their height. But I learn from everyone that comes into my life. I have become who I am because of the people in my life that I once looked up to.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: My chemistry teacher, Ms. Cavotta is easily one of the most positive and kind teachers that I have had the pleasure to have. I have always had an interest in science. But growing up with predominantly older male science teachers it almost seems unachievable to have a job in science. Ms. Cavotta being a young female chemist destroyed all of my doubts; she made

my dream seem in my reach. Ms. Cavotta is truly an incredible teacher and it is impossible to only describe her in 75-100 words. All I know is that every day I walk into that room and aspire to be as smart, kind, caring and incredible as “CBots”.

Activities outside of school: I am on a climbing team and ski whenever I have free time. I have a job at Lox of Bagels and work on the weekends.

Favorite pastime: I love to read and watch movies as a pastime because I like to enter other worlds that people have created.

Favorite movie: Any early 2000's rom coms

Favorite music/artist: Noah Khan or the Wallows

Favorite book: It is impossible to pick one so it is either The Dead Poets Society or Malibu Rising.

Goals, dreams & aspirations: I am only 18, so to be completely honest I don't know what I want my future to be yet. I know that I want to succeed in whatever I choose but I am not 100% what that is. But one dream that I am certain about is having the opportunity to travel the world and experience different cultures.

**Age:** 18**Parents/Guardians Names:** Jennifer and Michael Palulis**Siblings:** Izaac and Madeline Palulis**Grade Level:** 12

Ella Palulis - Salem Central School

Personal Inspiration: All my coaches, they've inspired me throughout the years and have taught me many different things that I'll carry with me past high school.

Hobbies: Photography, sports, theater.

Biggest Accomplishment: Young Athlete Award

School Activities: Track and Field, Wrestling, Soccer, Weightlifting, Drama Club, Mock Trial, Film Club, FBLA.

Community Service: Food pantry

Person you look up to and why: Mrs LeBlanc is always a positive joyful person.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: My music teacher Mr. Eastman has been my teacher all throughout high school. He gives kids the opportunity to join the drama club and really goes above and beyond to make sure we all have a good time.

Activities outside of school: Photography and hiking

Favorite pastime: Editing photos, graphic design

Favorite food: Strawberries

Favorite movie: Dead Poets Society

Favorite music/artist: Taylor Swift

Favorite book: The Sun is also a Star

Goals, dreams & aspirations: To become a well known photographer.

Louis F. Pratt - Whitehall Jr. - Sr. High School



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Mary Jean Pratt & Louis Pratt II

Siblings: Joshua Briggs, Brianne Ryan, Jason Pratt, Jacob Briggs

Grade Level: 12

Personal Inspiration: Growing up, my parents have always been my personal inspirations. My mother, who is a strong-willed leader, has always told me that "what you allow is what will continue" and this has caused me to become the activist and leader I am. Her advice has pushed me to be the change I wish to see. My father has always been incredibly involved in our community, pushing to make a difference and help out where it is needed. He has led me to be the volunteer I am today.

Hobbies: I enjoy shopping, graphic design, being crafty, tie-dyeing, traveling, acting, snacking, anything SADD related, and spending time with my dogs!

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment is launching my national campaign, U_Matter. U_Matter promotes healthy relationships, suicide awareness, and mental wellness. As a culmination of my SADD work, U_Matter is used in schools across the nation. Countless hours of advocating, working with students, partnerships, attending events, and making sure students are given the resources they needed were put into U_Matter. This project gives students the proper tools and knowledge to tackle any issues they might face mentally. It amazes me

to hear places like Ohio, Florida, California, and other states adding my project into their schools and SADD chapters.

School Activities: Whitehall Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) (President), National Honor Society (President), National English Honor Society (Treasurer), Student Council (President), Yearbook Committee (Head Editor), Drama Club (Treasurer), Varsity Track & Field, Varsity Football Cheerleading, Varsity Competition Cheer, Peer Helpers, Railroaders Against Violence Everywhere (Public Relations and Social Media Specialist), WSWHE BOCES Student Leadership Conference Advisory Committee, Morning Announcer, Railroader Rundown Newsletter Head Editor, 2023 Student Council Representative, WCS Board of Education Student Representative, Environmental Science Club, Battle of the Books 6th Grade Coach & Whitehall High Events Committee (Head Event Planner)

Community Service: Each year I complete over 300 hours of community service by volunteering with SADD, the Whitehall Elks, the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce, Skene Manor, the Whitehall Castle, Textless Live More, the Whitehall Christmas Cheer

Committee, the Skene Mountain Chapters of National Honor Society and National English Honor Society, as well as some other small volunteering tasks.

Person you look up to and why: When I began my journey with SADD, I crossed paths with the NYS Coordinator, Lauren Meade. Lauren has become both a mentor and a friend of mine, and helped me become the SADD leader I am today. Lauren demonstrates all the qualities of a well-rounded leader, and a person dedicated to making change. Lauren put hours upon hours into SADD's mission, and has led me to successfully launch my U_Matter campaign and create a national toolkit with SADD. Her drive, dedication, and positive attitude are what I strive to have as a leader in and outside of SADD.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: I cannot say I'd be the person I am without my teacher mom, Mrs. Wilson. From physical education, to volunteerism, and any advice about life, Mrs. Wilson had pushed me to use my full potential. When I first met Mrs. Wilson I had little leadership experience, and with her I've become a successful leader.

Jenna Shannon - Hadley-Luzerne Jr. - Sr. High School



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: Tiffany and George Gregory

Grade Level: 12

Personal Inspiration: I believe my personal inspiration comes from my parents, because they encourage me to become the best person I could possibly be. They are very open and supportive of my interests, and do whatever means necessary to further help my personal growth. I believe it would be my job to pay them forward with my successes and show them that all the encouragement and support they provided has paid off.

Hobbies: I enjoy playing my instrument; I am involved in volleyball and softball within school and weightlifting out of school.

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment through music would be doing a NYSSMA level 6 all state audition. My biggest accomplishment with weightlifting would be earning three NYS records and earning a spot in the national championships in Colorado Springs, Colorado from my first ever meet. Overall, I believe I have had a lot of personal growth since my freshman year in high school and has also been a big accomplishment for me, and I trust I can carry that through my college career.

School Activities: I am involved in volleyball, softball, student council, National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, and Math Honor Society.

Community Service: Bear Hugs For Jared SPCA Saratoga County Animal Shelter Joseph Brassert Fundraiser Winter Carnival (Lake George) Santa Sprint Soup Kitchen Long Horn Restaurant and Pub Thanksgiving Dinner Meals Blanchard Benefit Aerials Gymnastics Coin Drive in 2017, 2018, 2019 Power Of Pink Bake Sale Class Fundraisers Like: Car Wash, Vendor Fair, Prom Fundraiser, Garage Sale Fundraiser, Maple in April and Fall Festival Operation Adopt a Soldier Red Cross Blood Drive Jenna Ross Benefit

Person you look up to and why: I look up to my family members, especially my mom, because she strives for me to become the best person I could possibly be. I believe my family is my number one supporter. They are very open with my interests and do whatever is necessary to further my mental and physical growth.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: A lot of my

teachers have left positive impacts in my life but one that stands out is Mrs. Saheim, I believe this because she is both a former teacher of mine, my current coach, and coworker, so I definitely believe there is a further bond of which is not just a teacher-student bond but a friendship. I believe she has impacted me and helped form my love for athletics and overall attitude on a day to day basis.

Activities outside of school: I am enrolled in the Saratoga Youth Symphony, private lessons, and weightlifting around 4-5 times a week.

Favorite pastime: My favorite pastime would be practicing my instrument, spending time with my family and my two dogs.

Goals, dreams & aspirations: My goal for the 2023-2024 academic year is to attend college or university for pre-med and futuristically would be to eventually become a doctor.



Age: 17

Parents/Guardians Names: David Stockman and Ronda Stockman

Siblings: Devin Stockman Demi Stockman Lauren Siaulnski Jenna Siaulnski

Grade Level: 12

Brody Stockman - Fort Ann Central School

Personal Inspiration: There isn't specifically one person who set me on my path. I used to be an average student, possibly rowdy at times, until I reached 6th Grade, wherein I was put into Fort Ann's accelerated program, which allowed me to take Math and Science classes from the grade level above me. After this, many teachers and peers made me realize that I had the capacity to do great things academically and in my community, so I began to focus on my studies.

Hobbies: Writing, Marksmanship, Video Games, Card Games.

Biggest Accomplishment: I'm sort of embarrassed by it, but I would have to say that my biggest accomplishment was finally achieving a healthy weight level. For years I maintained an unhealthy BMI, and I couldn't find the drive to put any effort into doing something about it. In the Summer of 2022, that changed, one day I just decided that I was tired of it, so I started walking every day. Rain or shine, cool or scalding. I even started working a second job so I would have an extra drive to get up and walk first thing in the morning.

School Activities: I am part of the National Honor Society, as well as its Art counterpart,

National Art Honor Society, Art Club, Yearbook Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and The Student Leadership Conference Advisory Committee. I also participate in Fort Ann's Varsity Golf Team and Trap Team, and Academic Bowl. Finally, I am also the Student Council and Senior Class President.

Community Service: Much of my experience in community service, before, during, and after COVID, was spent with the Salvation Army. My friend, Matthew Casey, and his brother, Joshua Casey, would all stand outside of local groceries and ring bells in front of the red kettles around Christmas time. Sometimes we would take shifts to give the others an opportunity to warm up, and other times all three of us would stand around the kettle singing along to Christmas music on a portable speaker.

Person you look up to and why: This may sound odd, but I personally look up to my favorite video game developer, Goichi Suda. I've never personally met him, but I would love to. He started his own video game company in his garage, and has made some of the most experimental, bold, and mind-bending stories I have ever seen. He is dead-set and determined to see his visions through to the

end, and he doesn't let publishers or anybody else stand in the way of his creations. If he wasn't retiring soon, I would love to work at his company.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Patty Sue Morrison was my English teacher in Grades 10 and 11, as well as my teacher for her Short Stories elective in 12th Grade. Many of my classmates will say that she was a hard teacher, but I argue to say that she was fair. She tested and pushed our abilities to make sure we were prepared for any assignment, future or present, and always recognized and rewarded diligent work. Everything she says comes from the heart, and she was the sole force that encouraged me to continue writing.

Activities outside of school: Writing, West Fort Ann Volunteer Firehouse, Game Development.

Favorite music/artist: Metallica

Favorite book: Death of a Salesman

Goals, dreams & aspirations: My life goal is to earn a Master's Degree in Computer Science, then move to Texas and work at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center for NASA.



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Age: 18

Parents/Guardians Names: Benjamin and Jamie Strader

Siblings: Jackson Strader

Grade Level: 12

Anna Zelia Strader - Indian Lake Central School

Personal Inspiration: I am inspired by women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ community who stand strong and live their lives proudly despite the bias, and injustice that surrounds us. It is often unrewarding and exhausting to do this, but they lay the groundwork for all who come after just as trailblazers of the past have done for me.

Hobbies: I like to spend time outside; skiing, camping, canoeing, or hiking. I also enjoy playing soccer, reading, and listening to music.

Biggest Accomplishment: Like other people who face daily health challenges, as a student with narcolepsy I find that some days just getting through the school day feels like a big accomplishment. Over the years I learned ways to handle my condition, and just knowing that I am figuring it out as I go and getting better at it is my biggest accomplishment.

School Activities: Over the years I have been a part of many different activities and clubs including Junior and National Honor Society, Student Council where I was the Treasurer and am now President. I am the Class Treasurer, Co-President of Varsity Club, part of the ILCS Shared Decision Making Committee, and

Varsity Girls Soccer Team where my senior year I was the Captain. I also enjoy being a member of Big Buddies mentor program, am on the Post Star Bowl/Quiz Bowl team, and helped to start an Earth Club here at Indian Lake Central School.

Community Service: I participate in many different service projects and volunteer in different ways. I am on the NY State Governor's Youth Council, am a member of Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts Junior Board, and was a NYS student representative on the committee to reevaluate graduation requirements. As part of the Junior and National Honor Society I have helped to organize, fundraise, and volunteer for many different efforts including Red Cross blood drives, various food drives, a fundraiser for Ukraine, assembling care packages for overseas service members, and participating in a highway cleanup event.

Person you look up to and why: I look up to Greta Thunberg. When I'm tired and struggling I think of her starting her very first protest, all alone, fighting the overwhelming crises of climate change and challenging the adults who refuse to deal with the problem they created. And she never gives up.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: One teacher who has influenced me inside and outside the classroom is my science teacher Ms. Wade. She is a great teacher who helped nurture my love of science, first when she talked to me while I was in Elementary School and later when I had classes with her in middle and high school. She has been a great soccer coach, too, and in our school community helps all kids feel proud and safe.

Activities outside of school: I wait tables at The Hedges on Blue Mountain Lake, and I am a summer camp counselor at Adirondack Woodcraft Camps. Over the years I have played club soccer in Glens Falls with Empire City.

Goals, dreams & aspirations: When I go to college I am planning to explore more of the social sciences and the issues I am interested in. I hope to get a degree that I can use to get a job I feel passionate about and where I can help people who are less fortunate than I am. The world is full of problems, but if I can do my part to make others' lives better, just as other people have helped me, then it will all be worth it.



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Age: 18**Parents/Guardians Names:** John and Tracy Torda**Siblings:** Ashley Torda-Ecuyer**Grade Level:** 12

Lindsey Torda - Corinth High School

Personal Inspiration: The book “Gail Devers My Life in Story: Stronger” by Gail Devers has been my personal inspiration in life. This book is about a Track and Field Olympian. It was extremely inspirational to read of her acute illness and eventual recovery process, rising back to the top and going on to the Olympics and winning back to back gold medals. I myself have struggled with injuries and seeing the way she has persevered while maintaining a positive attitude, inspired me to never give up either. She has taught me to rise above all challenges and keep fighting.

Hobbies: Some of my hobbies include reading, running, and swimming.

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment is the creation and success I have from my nonprofit I run on Instagram. At the end of eighth grade I started an account in hopes to spread awareness on kids with disabilities. I never thought much would come from it, however it's grown significantly. I continue to spread awareness and send out small care packages within the US too! Bringing joy to kids while making others around me more understanding of differences makes me feel beyond accomplished in life. I love doing this and

it's only the start of making my mark on this world. (Username is Spreading.awareness3)

School Activities: My school activities I am involved in include the Varsity Track and Field team, Varsity Unified basketball, National Honor Society, Foreign Language National Honor Society, SADD club (students against destructive decisions), and World language club!

Community Service: Throughout high school I have done an abundant amount of community service. The past two years I have volunteered in a middle school special education classroom to assist teaching during my study halls. Another huge thing I have done was helping plant thousands of crops that were donated to the Regional food bank of New York for families all across the state. I have done many other small projects throughout high school but these are the two that stick out the most for me.

Person you look up to and why: The person I look up to the most is my older sister, Ashley. She has always pushed me to be the best version of myself and has influenced me in a variety of ways. She is currently a special education teacher and inspired me from a young age to also want to do so. She

is an amazing human who has never given up despite the challenges she has faced. I am so thankful to have had her growing up and continue to have her by my side to encourage me every day!

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how:

A teacher who has positively impacted my life is my Spanish teacher, Señora Mullin. She is an incredibly compassionate teacher who works hard to make sure all her students have an understanding of the content being taught. She goes above and beyond to assist students in and out of the classroom. She has given me a safe space to go to on hard days and supported me in many different ways. She is a teacher who has made a large impact on me and I will always be grateful to have had her as a teacher.

Activities outside of school: Some activities outside of school that I enjoy is hanging out with friends, going to sporting events, and babysitting my niece.

Goals, dreams & aspirations: My biggest aspiration in life is not only to be the best version of myself but to also make an impact on this world and the people around me.

**Age:** 16**Parents/Guardians Names:** Crystal Clark, Shawn Tuller**Siblings:** Hayley Tuller**Grade Level:** 11

Shelby Tuller - Minerva Central School

Personal Inspiration: Helping the community in both what I can do now and what I will be able to in the future is what inspires me.

Hobbies: Reading, volleyball

Biggest Accomplishment: I received the Triple C award (Courage, Commitment, and Character) from the Attorney General.

School Activities: Student Council President, Ember, Culture Club, Class Vice-President, North Country Quiz Bowl, Band, Library Aid, CASMA, Membership in the Minerva Central School Honor Society

Community Service: 2 volunteer years at Word of Life, Headstone Cleaning, Blood Donation

Person you look up to and why: Robert Kirker, because he is confident in what he does and he is direct when speaking. He makes things easy to understand and doesn't shame people when they don't.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Mrs. Janelle Beaulieu has made me more confident in my art and my abilities and has helped me grow to be who I am today.

Activities outside of school: 4-H Club Member (9 years): Shooting Sports, Career Explorations at Cornell, State Fair Participant and Worker, STARR, 2 year Spirit Award, Public Presentations; Blood Donation, Volunteer at Word of Life, Church Volunteer, Present Employee at Gore Mountain, Junior member of my town fire company, pet sitting service for locals

Favorite pastime: Hanging out with my cat Panther

Favorite food: Lo Mein

Favorite movie: Howl's Moving Castle

Favorite music/artist: Mitski (Mitsuki Laycock)

Favorite book: Lightning by Dean Koontz

Goals, dreams & aspirations: I want to be a veterinarian when I'm older.

What others say about Shelby

Leadership Development: Shelby is a leader for her class. She has drive and determination that propels her to challenge herself. She is driven to meet her academic and future goals. She takes every opportunity presented to her to help set herself up for success and to contribute to her community. Shelby does this with a

smile on her face and kindness to all.

Shelby's work ethic and positive attitude stands out among her peers. She is respected by teachers and students. The kindness and consideration she portrays is appreciated and admired by all who come in contact with her.

Shelby has a goal of going to college for veterinary science and opening her own clinic to help the people of her hometown community. Shelby has started her own pet-sitting business to support her goals with this experience.

Shelby is, by nature, a quiet and studious young woman. This can be seen in how she is a “helper” whenever there is a need. She volunteered to give up her study hall each day to help with a group of special education kindergarteners so they receive academic support. She assists the librarian by shelving books, setting up the new organizational system and other odd jobs. She gone from a more “behind the scene” role when volunteering at her job, to someone who helps out in many ways.



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Age: 17**Parents/Guardians Names:** Virginia and Russell VanDeusen**Grade Level:** 12

Caitlyn VanDeusen - Schuylerville High School

Personal Inspiration: My family and school staff have inspired me to reach for the stars and go after my dreams. Throughout my life they have continued to support me in everything I do. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be the person I am today.

Hobbies: Showing cows, reading, and kayaking

Biggest Accomplishment: My biggest accomplishment was being named one of the two 2023 New York State Distinguished Junior Members. This is an award that I have been working towards since I was 9 years old. With this I am able to represent the New York Holstein Association and the junior members.

School Activities: I am the recording secretary of the National Honor Society and the secretary of the Schuylerville FFA Chapter. As a member and officer of FFA I have competed in competitions such as prepared public speaking and dairy judging at the local, state, and national levels.

Community Service: I have participated in many community service activities such as handing out food at milk drives during the Covid-19 pandemic, helping with Think

Differently Day at the Saratoga County Fair, and at various 4H events.

Person you look up to and why: My cousin Janet Hanehan is the person I look up to the most. Growing up I have always looked up to her and wanted to do all of the things she did. She has always supported me and been a positive influence in my life.

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: Many of my teachers have positively impacted my life, but not as much as Mr. Ross Marvin. Mr. Marvin has been my English teacher in 11th and 12th grade. He is an amazing English teacher and has helped me greatly with my writing. He has always supported and encouraged me with everything I do. In addition to this he has always been there for me when I am having a bad day or need someone to talk to. Mr. Marvin has been such a positive influence on me and I am so grateful for that.

Activities outside of school: I am a member of 4H and the New York Holstein Association. I currently serve as the secretary of the Saratoga County 4H Dairy

Club and I help younger 4H members learn how to show cows. I am also on the junior executive committee for the New York Holstein Association. I am currently one of two New York State Distinguished Junior Members, which is a non-elected position, and I have served as the recording secretary for the past two years. I also show my dairy cows throughout the summer at several shows.

Favorite pastime: My favorite pastime is showing cows.

Favorite food: Mashed potatoes

Favorite movie: Remember the Titans

Favorite music/artist: My favorite musician is Cassadee Pope.

Favorite book: "It Ends With Us" by Colleen Hoover

Goals, dreams & aspirations: After graduating high school I want to go to college for agricultural education so I can become an agriculture teacher. This will allow me to continue advocating for agriculture and teaching others about the industry that has given me so many opportunities.



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Age: 18**Parents/Guardians Names:** Mary Beth York (mother) and Robert York (father)**Siblings:** Sara York and Lindsey York (2 older sisters)**Grade Level:** 12

Abigail "Abby" York - Queensbury High School

Personal Inspiration: What inspires me the most is the possibility of impacting someone else's life for the better that comes with each new day. When I am able to make someone smile, or give a compliment and see someone's whole face light up, I fall in love with my own life a little bit more. Positivity is an incredible vibration to emit throughout the world. Kindness is extremely contagious and practicing such acts myself or watching others do the same is what drives me through everything.

Biggest Accomplishment : There are many ways to answer this question. Academically, I have received a few student spotlight awards that really meant a lot to me. It's an amazing feeling to be recognized in different content areas for the work you put in. But in general, I'd say my biggest accomplishment is the connections I've made through working with younger students. It's what inspires me the most and one of the greatest goals in my life, so when I really do get to see how my encouragement affects others it makes me feel like I'm on top of the world!

School Activities: In school, I have the privilege of being senior class secretary. I am a member of the National Honors Society as well as the National French Honors Society, and

participate in key club, NCBL/ally club, and student senate. I also participate in teaching fourth and fifth graders French through a language program during different parts of the school year, and work with elementary students learning English as a new language after school on Mondays! In addition, I am a member of the madrigal singers at Queensbury. I love participating in all of these activities!

Community Service: Some of my favorite events to help out with in the community include the Adirondack Balloon Festival, the Town of Queensbury Drive Thru Holiday Festival, the local and annual Walk to End Alzheimer's event, and spending spare time throughout the summers helping at Up Yonda Farm. I love finding new events to volunteer at and to keep going back to. I am grateful for all of the additional experiences I've had outside of the classroom working with others. Once you start getting involved, it's impossible to stop!

Person you look up to and why: I look up to both of my parents because they have always shown all three of their daughters endless support and encouragement in all of life's challenges. I have learned so much from them and their own hard work and love is something I wish to reflect in my own life. I am beyond grateful for everything they do for me and the

rest of my family!

Name a teacher who has positively impacted your life inside and outside the classroom and how: There are so many! I have been lucky enough to experience many amazing teachers throughout my time as a Queensbury student. Miss Bus, my sixth grade English teacher, was one who always knew how to cultivate connection and compassion within her classroom. She is a natural in this field of work and her constant demonstration of kindness to all of her students as well as her ability to get to know each one on an individual level makes her extremely special. She has always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and I would not be the same without her constant support!

Activities outside of school: I have taken private voice lessons for many years and love going to my sessions on the weekends! I also keep myself busy during different volunteer opportunities within the community and with different jobs, working as a camp counselor in the summer mornings and as a hostess in the summer evenings. I love to babysit in my spare time as well and love going to different workout classes with my friends. I try to stay as involved as I can by taking chances on everything that interests me.

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| Eric Bush—Newcomb Central School | Hazel Crossman—South Glens Falls High School | Sophie DelSignore—Bolton Central
School/WSWHE BOCES | Emma Hammond—Hudson Falls High School | Clare Hegener—Saratoga Springs High School | Andrew
Jeckel—Lake George Jr.-Sr. High School | Kerri Jennings—Granville Jr.-Sr. High School | Aidan Jones—Greenwich Jr.-Sr. High School
| Julia Morris—Johnsburg Central School | Morrison Northrop—Glens Falls High School | Ella Palulis—Salem Central School | Lou-
is Pratt—Whitehall Jr.-Sr. High School | Jenna Shannon—Hadley-Luzerne Jr.-Sr. High School | Brody Stockman—Fort Ann Central
School | Anna Strader—Indian Lake Central School | Lindsey Torda—Corinth Central School | Shelby Tuller—Minerva Central
School | Caitlyn VanDeusen—Schuylerville High School | Abigail York—Queensbury High School

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