

Wellesley Scholarship Foundation's Annual Awards Ceremony

The Wellesley Scholarship Foundation (WSF) held its annual Awards Ceremony on June 11 with a reception and award presentation at Wellesley's Town Hall for graduating high school senior scholarship recipients and their families. WSF President Sarah Pedersen announced \$259,500 in annual awards for the 2013-14 academic year, comprised of 76 need-based scholarships and 8 merit recognitions, to qualified undergraduate college students residing in Wellesley. In addition to WSF funded awards, Pedersen announced community scholarships facilitated by WSF as well as the Town of Wellesley Scholars Program totaling over \$200,000. These were offered by the Wellesley Kiwanis Club, Wellesley Hills Woman's Club, Wellesley Historical Society, Wellesley War Memorial, Newcomers' Club, Wellesley Patrolmen's Association, Wellesley Square Merchants Association and Wellesley Cooperative Clothing Exchange as well as Wellesley College, Babson College and Wesleyan University.

Awards were presented to thirty-five recent high school graduates. A committee of four WSF Trustees evaluates financial aid applications in complete confidence to select qualified recipients and to make recommendations to outside town organizations. A highlight of the award ceremony is the matching of award recipients with named scholarships. These are awarded in honor of many respected Wellesley citizens, teachers, youth coaches, past WSF Board members, and town residents, many of whom were also scholarship recipients themselves. This connection provides a link between many generations of Wellesley residents and current students, who share the same dream of achieving a higher level of education. One presentation was made by Brooks and Jeanie Goddard, inspirational former WHS English teachers, for an award established in their name in 2001 as part of the 50th Gala celebration of WSF. Other educator awards honored Rena Mirkin, a former WHS Principal, Douglas Sands, a former WMS Science teacher, and Marcia Doiron, a former WHS child lab instructor. Katherine Babson, Town Selectman, announced the David L Babson Award in honor of her father, one of the original 1934 Wellesley Town Meeting Members. As awards were presented, the audience had the opportunity to learn about the outstanding achievements of the well-deserved award recipients.

In addition to its primary focus of providing need based awards, WSF awards two merit recognitions. These awards are named for two prominent Wellesley individuals who contributed lifelong service to the town and commitment to education. These awards are funded by longstanding private endowments. Both awards are for \$3,000 per year, and are renewable for four years.

The first award is given in honor of Margaret E. Daniels, who was a supporter of WSF since its inception in 1951. In her will she provided a bequest to WSF for a scholarship to be "regarded as an honor and tribute to a young person who wishes to cultivate her mind..." The 2013 Margaret E. Daniels Award recipient is Anna Zannetos, a recent WHS graduate.

Anna is a remarkably gifted student who has taken a rigorous academic program, achieving over a 4.9 grade point average. One of her teachers remarked: "Anna has a passion for learning, a disciplined work ethic and ever-growing insightfulness.... She has earned my utmost respect as a student but more importantly as a wonderful human being." A member of the National Honor Society and the French

National Honor Society, she has also won numerous academic awards. Outside of the classroom, Anna founded the Links Mentoring Program and has been involved with several other groups with the shared objectives of improving the climate at Wellesley High School and making the school a more welcoming place. In addition, she has been a 4 year member of the WHS ice hockey team. Consistent with her altruistic spirit, Anna will continue an internship with City Year and has plans to attend Harvard University in the fall of 2014.

The second merit scholarship is named for Donald P. Babson, who generously served the community throughout his life. In 1997 after his death, his family created a merit scholarship to be given to “a male student who demonstrates a high level of distinction in scholarship, citizenship, and character...” Merritt Losert is the recipient of the 2013 Donald P. Babson Merit Award.

Merritt, a WHS graduate, is a tremendously gifted student. While taking 8 Advanced Placement courses and multiple honors courses with an emphasis on math and science, Merritt has maintained a remarkable 5.0 grade point average. One of his teachers remarked: “I have had the privilege of working with truly stellar students at Wellesley High School, yet Merritt stands out as one of the most talented I have encountered.” Merritt is a National Merit semifinalist and a member of the National Honor Society. He has won numerous academic awards. Music is a passion for Merritt. As a guitar player, he has been a four year member of the Rivers School Conservatory Jazz Ensemble, the Wellesley High Two O’Clock Jazz Band, and the “Friends with Bennett” Jazz Combo. Among his many activities, he was a member of the Varsity ski team. Merritt will attend Dartmouth College this fall.

This ceremony is a celebratory one, culminating a year of fundraising. The crucial mission of WSF, since 1951, is to provide funds to satisfy as much of the unmet financial need as possible for Wellesley’s college bound students. Financial assistance for these awards is derived from WSF’s annual fund drive and income generated from endowment assets. Notwithstanding these generous awards, Pedersen noted, “our scholarship committee had a significant increase in financial aid applications this year, resulting in a larger amount of remaining unmet need for graduating seniors, and we anticipate these needs to be even greater in future years.” During WSF’s Board meeting later that evening, Pedersen highlighted this growing financial need within the Wellesley community, stemming from larger upcoming WHS graduating classes and increasing costs for college education. Pedersen emphasized, “We hope to raise awareness in the community and are confident that the continued generosity of Wellesley residents and friends will enable WSF to meet these future unmet financial needs, thereby allowing our students to pursue their dreams and to attend college...”

For more information about donating or applying for a scholarship, go to www.wellesleyscholarshipfoundation.org.