

Wellesley Scholarship Foundation Awards \$287,250

The Wellesley Scholarship Foundation (WSF) held its annual awards ceremony on June 9th, announcing its yearly scholarships: \$263,250 in need-based college scholarships to 86 students, and \$24,000 in endowed merit awards to 8 students. In addition, WSF helped facilitate and administer outside community based awards, raising the grand total to \$417,450 in undergraduate scholarships sponsored by Wellesley- based organizations.

At this annual June ceremony, awards were presented to 28 recent high school graduates. Gathered in the Great Hall within the Wellesley Town Hall, WSF President Sarah Pedersen welcomed award recipients and their parents, members of the community, and honored guests to the Foundation's 63rd Awards Ceremony. Pedersen remarked that, "WSF is proud to be part of an honored tradition to help deserving young people from this community further their education after high school." Invited guests included Patti Quigley, Chair of School Committee; David Lussier, Superintendent of Wellesley Public Schools; and Jamie Chisum, Wellesley High School (WHS) Principal.

The highlight of the ceremony was learning about the tremendous accomplishments of these students. In addition to many who achieved strong academic records, award recipients were participants in almost every varsity sport at WHS, ranging from football to lacrosse to Nordic skiing to tennis and field hockey. Accomplishments in music ensembles, involvement in performing arts, and projects in visual arts were other featured pursuits. Many awardees volunteered in the Wellesley community, served as peer tutors, helped at area nursing residences and hospitals, coached youth sports, worked in animal shelters, and served on environmental committees. A large number of recipients were active in their local places of worship. Their aspirations included coursework in computer science, engineering, math, business, biology, medicine, economics and the arts. Next fall a sample of the colleges they will be attending include UMass (all locations), Boston University, Northeastern, Bucknell University, Gettysburg College, University of Vermont, Hamilton College, Quinnipiac University plus other well regarded institutions, many of which awarded our students very generous financial aid packages.

The ceremony illuminated deep historical traditions of providing for scholarship aid within the Town of Wellesley and the occasion gave many donors an opportunity to meet graduating high school recipients. WSF's named awards are in honor of respected Wellesley citizens, teachers, youth coaches, past WSF Board members, residents and local businesses. At this year's ceremony, Rena Mirkin, former WHS Principal, announced her recently renamed scholarship as the "Rena and Howard Mirkin Scholarship", in honor of the couple's 50th anniversary and shared their intent to receive congratulations in the form of scholarship donations. Brooks and Jeanie Goddard, inspirational former WHS English teachers, made enthusiastic presentations of their own named award and Jeanie exclaimed, "You glorious souls are our major source of inspiration." Gig Babson presented awards named after her late husband, J. Michael Harding, and her father, David L. Babson. She reminisced about her father, "He loved the town of Wellesley and he was so proud and appreciative for the education she and her siblings received."

Several town businesses also contribute annual scholarships. Rick Cram, representing the Wellesley Square Merchants Association said, "They strive to be your neighbors." Another local business award, from the Wellesley Bank Charitable Foundation, was presented by Tom Fontaine, President of Wellesley Bank. New this year, a Wellesley Toyota-Scion Community Award was presented by the son of the founder, Nai Nam Ko, Jr.

In addition to its primary focus of providing need based awards, WSF awards new two merit recognitions. These awards are named for two prominent Wellesley individuals and are 100% funded from assets set aside for these awards in longstanding private endowments.

The 2015 Margaret E. Daniels Award recipient is Mara Roth, a recent WHS graduate. Mara is a top student in the most challenging courses and has received academic honors including National Honor Society, and Departmental awards in French, History, English and Math and the Columbia University Book Award.

Mara is also an accomplished musician; she has earned the prestigious honors of playing as the principal oboe in the All Eastern and State Orchestras. She also performs with the WHS Wind Ensemble and the Rivers Youth Orchestra. Also an athlete, Mara is a runner on the WHS Varsity Track and Cross Country teams and was Cross Country Captain her senior season. She will attend Harvard University this fall.

The merit scholarship for a senior male student, the Donald P. Babson Merit Award, was presented to Kevin Hu, also a 2015 WHS graduate. Kevin's coursework has been uniquely challenging and he consistently sets the standard of performance in his classes. He is a National Merit Semifinalist and AP Scholar, book and departmental award winner in History, Computer Science, Latin and Chemistry and the Yale Book Award winner.

Kevin is an accomplished Alto Saxophone player and performs with the WHS Wind Ensemble and 2:00 Jazz Band. He served as Captain of the school's Academic Decathlon and Math Teams and appeared on public television's High School Quiz Show. This fall, Kevin will matriculate at Yale University where he expects to study applied mathematics and economics.

As well as granting its own scholarships annually, WSF evaluates need and assists in recipient selection for awards with eight other civic organizations and two colleges, and coordinates with another community organization to fund deserving students. Together these outside groups provided an additional \$130,700 in financial aid awards. Organizations include the Wellesley Hills Junior Women's Club, Kiwanis Club, Wellesley Hills Women's Club, Wellesley Toyota-Scion, Wellesley War Memorial, Wellesley Historical Society, Wellesley Patrolmen's Association, Wellesley Cooperative Clothing Exchange, Wellesley Square Merchants' Association, and the Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project and the Wellesley Town Scholars Program. When combined with the WSF resources, these Wellesley-based organizations funded \$417,450 in 112 scholarships this year.

The awards 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. Pedersen closed the ceremony by thanking all WSF donors who made tonight's awards possible. She remarked, "It is only through the generosity of hundreds of donors to WSF through the years and the concerted efforts of many organizations in town that we are able to provide financial assistance." Congratulating the students, Pedersen said, "We have placed our financial bets upon you. Make us, your families, and your teachers proud of you. Take advantage of all the opportunities to learn that will come your way, both in and out of the classroom. And, when the time comes, don't forget to lend a helping hand to those who will follow you."

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

Attached Photo Caption: At WSF Annual Awards Ceremony, the 2015 Merit Award Recipients, Kevin Hu and Mara Roth are flanked by WSF Scholarship Chair Liz Weaver (center).

Attached Photo Credit: Photographed by George Roberts.