

Milestone Moment for HGCC Foundation Bursary Program



HGCC Foundation President Ken Lancaster with a group of bursary recipients from the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board and their teachers/guidance counsellors.

It's a remarkable milestone achievement that everyone at Hamilton Golf & Country Club should take note of and feel proud of.

To the delight of 22 students, their teachers and parents, the HGCC Foundation Bursary Program hit a massive milestone at its annual luncheon in June, handing out the largest number of secondary school bursaries to date, as well as a record total donation of \$99,000 to the aspiring young men and women who will head off to college and university in the fall.

"This has been a fantastic program over the last four years, and to see it evolve from a handful of schools in year one to over 20 students today, covering all secondary schools in Hamilton, is remarkable," says Matthew Gerard, Associate Director Business Services at the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. "It's wonderful to see the membership coming together to support these incredible students, and I look forward to learning more about the

new mentorship program that is being launched later this year.

"This program runs much deeper than a student receiving a \$4,500 award. For many of them, this funding helps them cross the tipping point of whether they can afford to attend the first year of post-secondary school, and we know what happens to them if they don't go to school in the fall – they never have another opportunity, and the dream dies. Once they enter college or university, their chances of success are significantly improved. This is life-changing for some of them," adds Amy Leaming Cote, Executive Director of the Hamilton Foundation for Student Success.

From 2015 to 2021, the Foundation sponsored Crown Ward Bursaries. The secondary school bursary program was launched as a pilot with four bursaries in 2022, increased to ten bursaries in 2023, and expanded to 16 bursaries in 2024. "The highlight of the bursary luncheon was meeting the students and hearing their plans for post-secondary education and

seeing their appreciation for the bursary," says Club President Brian Bidulka, who welcomed the students. "It was also terrific to meet the teachers and administrators who shared their perspectives on how impactful the program is. Excellent leadership and execution from the Foundation to continue to grow the program and have such a positive impact across our community."

Sheila Drury, Chair of the Bursary Mentorship Program, shared a few details about the new pilot program that aims to connect bursary recipients with members at HGCC to share their expertise and knowledge. "Our hope is that we can provide a network to assist the students in their career path," Sheila says.

Rose Musa was flying higher than Mary Poppins with a big smile on her face during the luncheon, despite having the leading role later that night in the first of eight performances of the musical at Glendale Secondary School.



Big smiles for all of the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board bursary recipients for 2025.

"It has always been a dream of mine to sing and act, and this scholarship is going to help make that happen," says Rose, who will be attending the Music Theatre program at Sheridan College in the fall.

"I have been doing a lot of research about Julie Andrews and getting to know who she is so I can do this show. It's been around for a long time, but there's so much magic in it, it comes to life," says Rose, who played flute for seven years. "I'm looking forward to getting started in September." Upon graduating from the four-year honours bachelor program, Rose is hoping to obtain a Master's in Counselling and Psychology, so the curtain is just rising on this act.

"I didn't believe it when my teacher told me I would be receiving this award," says Keyshawn Newell, who is taking Business Marketing at Mohawk College in September. He is working as a landscaper for the summer and will continue to live at home while attending school. "Going to college is a choice I didn't think I was going to be able to make. This bursary will fund most of the first year for me. I still can't believe this is happening. I'm very thankful to the members at Hamilton G&CC for giving me this opportunity." Keyshawn is hopeful that his younger brother will be inspired to pursue his dreams and attend a college or university.

Ancaster High School art teacher Geoff Malcolm thinks it would be an exciting

idea for Matthew Jung to return to his high school one day and design a new wing for the building. Whether it happens, we will have to wait and see. Still, it's certainly a possibility for the young man who earned a 95 percent average that got him into the Architecture program at Carleton University.

"I was stunned when I heard I was receiving the scholarship. It takes a lot of stress off of first year. I'm thrilled. Thank you to HGCC. This is great," says Matthew, who hopes to finish his Masters studies in the US or the UK.

After watching "Forensic Files and other medical programs on TV with her mother for years, Karsyn Montour knew she wanted to take Forensic Sciences, and she will be doing that this fall at the University of Toronto.

"I was called down to the guidance office, and I was pretty much in shock when I heard the news. I never expected to receive an award as prestigious as this. It's

huge. It will help pay some of the bills," says the Bernie Custis Secondary School student who loves chemistry and will live in residence this fall.

Havanna Weller thought she was in trouble when she was called down to the guidance office at Westmount Secondary School. She asked the counsellor, Meredyth Keating, "Have I done something wrong? To which Meredyth responded, "What you have done is earned yourself a big bursary."

Havanna's mother got sick about 18 months ago, and life has had its challenges since then. "She was extremely happy for me and proud of me," says Havanna, who will be taking Humanities English at McMaster University in the fall and hopes to attend law school after that. "I'm very thankful for the bursary. I don't know what we would have done without it."

"I'm going to Brock University for Concurrent Education in Child and Youth Studies," Emma Lillycropp says with the happiest of smiles. Finances are tight at home, and this gift will make all the difference. "When they called me down to the office, I thought I was in trouble, and then they told me the good news. It's absolutely incredible. Thank you so much, HGCC. I want to teach primary and junior students and make a difference in their lives, just as the teachers who have helped me along the way have done," she adds.



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