

BUSINESS

quarterly

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Scholarships play a key role in students' future

By Deborah Rose

Buses are rolling. Academia is once again in session. For many students, post-high school education is the prime focus now, and that can come with a big price tag.

Fortunately, grants and scholarships are available to help students pay tuition, for books and more. Several hundred thousand dollars in scholarships were distributed to graduating seniors at New Milford High School this spring.

The Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce recently funded three scholarships — one from the Chamber and two from the Chamber's Village Fair Days' Committee — to students entering their first year of college.

"Eventually, kids who receive the scholarships in some way, shape or form, will become part of a business community... wherever that may be," said Bob Hanna, chairman of the Chamber's Village Fair Days committee.

His hope is recipients will "pay it forward" and "remember where (their scholarships) came from" — right here in their hometown from the Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber is a non-profit organization aiming to "develop, encourage, promote, and protect the commercial, industrial, professional and general business interests of the community; and to promote the civic interests and general welfare of the town of New Milford and its trade area," according to its mission statement.

Sydney Silva was given the Chamber's \$1,000 Frederick J. Wynne Scholarship, Meghan Roche received the Chamber's VFD Herman Izzard Scholarship of \$2,000 and Hannah Dieterle was the recipient of the Chamber's \$2,000 VFD Bill and Fran Babbino Scholarship.

The scholarship gives "me more opportunities for education and school," said Meghan, 18, who recently started her first year at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury.

She plans to study nursing, following in the footsteps of her mother, Kay, who is a nurse at Candlewood Valley Health & Rehabilitation Center in town. Meghan doesn't know



NORM CUMMINGS/SPECTRUM

Sydney Silva receives the Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce's Frederick J. Wynne Scholarship at the conclusion of the Chamber-sponsored fair July 26. Presenting the check to Sydney is Village Fair Days chairman Bob Hanna.



NORM CUMMINGS/SPECTRUM

Recent New Milford High School graduate Hannah Dieterle was the recipient of this year's Chamber Village Fair Days Bill and Fran Babbino Scholarship. Hannah is shown above with fair chairman Bob Hanna at the July 26 check presentation.



DEBORAH ROSE/SPECTRUM

The Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce supported three scholarships for graduating New Milford High School seniors in 2014. One scholarship was supported by the Chamber and two scholarships were funded by Village Fair Days Committee. Meghan Roche, above, received the VFD's Herman Izzard Scholarship, which will help her pursue her dreams to become a nurse, following in the footsteps of her mother, Kay, shown above with Meghan.

what area of nursing she will focus on, but she is thinking about labor/maternity or the neonatal intensive care.

"I'm very happy. This (scholarship) helps a lot," said Meghan, who plays flute, participated in the NMHS marching band, and was active with the Horgan Academy of Irish Dance while in school.

Like Meghan, Sydney, 18, has plans to study nursing at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y.

Applying for scholarships was an important part of planning for her future, she said, noting her mother encouraged her to apply for as many as possible.

"I'm very grateful for all of the scholarships I was awarded," said Sydney, who at NMHS was a member of the dance team for four years, served as vice president of her class all four years, and was involved with the yearbook, among other activities.

Sydney's mother, Gina, praised and expressed gratitude to the Greater New Milford community for offering "so many scholarships."

Meghan's mother agrees. "We were just extremely grateful for the opportunity this scholarship and others will give Meghan," Roche related.

Roche said her daughter assumed responsibility for her education, investing time and research, participating in interviews and meetings, and networking as she applied for scholarships.

Organization was key, she noted, citing her daughter's binder — complete with essay samples,

transcripts and other pertinent information for scholarship applications.

"It was a blessing for her to receive it," said Hannah's mother, Karin, who said her 18-year-old daughter is majoring in English as a Second Language at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

Dieterle said her daughter has been working for the past two years to save up for college, so "every little bit (of scholarship) is a blessing."

Hanna said the two VFD scholarship recipients are screened and selected by members of the John Pettibone Memorial Scholarship Fund, while the Frederick J. Wynne Scholarship recipient is selected by members of the Chamber board of directors (see sidebar, this page).

"We put our trust in the Pettibone Fund" in the selection process of the two VFD scholarships, Hanna said. "They've always put forth seniors who have excelled...and they've always put forth very good candidates."

Funds for the two VFD scholarships come from a portion of funds raised at the fair from, for example, vendor fees. Monies for the Frederick J. Wynne Scholarship come from the Chamber's budget.

The Chamber organizes and presents several events throughout the year, including the Crystal Winter Gala, the Village Fair Days, a Fourth of July celebration and fireworks display, a Harvest Festival, a membership orientation breakfast, a hands-on train display, monthly Business Scenes and Breakfast Scenes, and Lunch & Learn seminars.

CHAMBER SCHOLARSHIPS — AT A GLANCE

Frederick J. Wynne Scholarship: Open to students who have a parent or guardian who works for a business that is a member of the Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce or is employed himself/herself by a business who is a member of the chamber, and who has demonstrated community service and a need for financial assistance. The scholarship is named for former five-year Chamber president Frederick J. Wynne, who died in 2008. Wynne, a World War II veteran and longtime CL & P employee, was also a member of the town's Economic Development Commission and chairman of the Restoration of the Railroad Station committee. The recipient is selected by the Cham-

ber's board of directors. **Chamber's Village Fair Days Bill and Fran Babbino Scholarship:** Named for longtime Chamber president and Village Fair Days chairman Bill Babbino and his wife, Fran, who operate Double Dragon DoJo in town. "They have done so much for the community that people don't even know about," said VFD chairman Bob Hanna. Double Dragon DoJo has conducted numerous activities to raise funds for charities, and, as Chamber president, Bill played an integral role in helping the Chamber increase membership and develop a stronger presence in the community, according to Hanna. The recipient is screened and selected by the John Pettibone Memorial

Scholarship Fund. **Chamber's Village Fair Days Herman Izzard Scholarship:** Named for Herman Izzard, who just completed his 19th year as a VFD volunteer. Izzard, a Korean War veteran who was awarded a Silver Star, has been active in the community in various capacities. He has taught computer classes at the senior center, and is involved with the Knights of Columbus, the VFW and other organizations. "He's a smart gentleman... just nice and there to help everyone," said Bob Hanna, VFD chairman. "He's unassuming. You don't realize what this man has done." Hanna said. The recipient is screened and selected by the John Pettibone Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Thanks offered for community support

Editor's Note: Bob Hanna, chairman of the Village Fair Days, contributed to this column.

Bob and I hope you enjoyed the 47th annual Village Fair Days.

Again this year, we had beautiful weather, large crowds and great entertainment — a perfect, two-day, community event.

Congratulations and thank you



Denise Del Mastro

They have done, and continue to do, so much for our community.

Congratulations also to the scholarship recipients.

We would like to offer our congratulations to Roland and Mary Miller, the king and queen of the fair.

They are very deserving and we wish them the best in the future.

We would like to thank all of the businesses and individuals who helped make the fair happen in various ways.

And a great big, shout-out-loud "thank you" goes to the Village Fair Days Committee and the many volunteers who helped during the fair.

We invite you to Village

Fair Days 2015, which will be held on July 24-25.

Things you might not realize about Village Fair Days

Plans are already underway for the 48th annual Village Fair Days.

The event is sponsored by the Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce and gives Chamber members and local businesses the opportunity to showcase and promote

their businesses and services to the general public.

However, business marketing is not the sole purpose of the fair. Many organizations, nonprofits, clubs, civic groups and churches that also participate in the Village Fair Days use the fair as a major fundraising source.

In one way or another, the money these groups raise during the fair goes

back to our community.

Village Fair Days is also a fundraiser for the Greater New Milford Chamber of Commerce.

Funds raised help us to host community events such as the Fourth of July Celebration and fireworks display, Harvest Festival, the Festival of Lights/tree-lighting ceremony and the hands-on train display.

This year, we teamed **See Thanks on S12**



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