

PACMOAA 2024 Scholarship Winners

Thank you to the Scholarship Committee members this year: Co-Chairs Scott Dickinson and Sherry Ferki and Lynn Terry. The online application and grading forms that Scott set up in 2017 really facilitated the review process. After two years of having only one completed application submitted for the scholarships, 8 students applied this year! Applicants came from Suffolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth and Smithfield. Four were very competitive and well-rounded; closely matched in academics, involvement in extracurricular activities, leadership positions, and community service! All received numerous honors and awards, and two students were very involved in JROTC. It is amazing how students can maintain excellent grades while participating in many extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, band, and community activities as well as providing leadership in some of these endeavors.



Picture at Left: From left to right Jaden Barnes, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, and Zack Wagner.

Jaden Barnes from Lakeland High School and Zach Wagner from Grassfield High School were the top two candidates. Both are amazing young men. Jaden is going to Florida A & M with a major in cybersecurity and long-term goal of being a Marine Corps pilot. Zach is going to Princeton with a major in economics and minor in biology (pre-medical school track). His long-term goal is to be a medical professional in the Army. Both graciously asked that other students be given the scholarships as they both had recently been notified that they would have all their expenses paid through other

scholarships. In the 22 years I have been on the Scholarship Committee, no one has ever told me that before!!

The 2024 scholarship recipients are Mason Ternes from Nansemond River High School and Naza Agbasi from Smithfield High School. Both are outstanding students that maintained superior grades while taking many advanced classes, participating in sports and belonging to several honor societies.



Mason Ternes (Picture left) plans to attend the University of FL and major in mechanical and aerospace engineering. He had a 4.5 average and took mainly Honors and AP courses. Mason was involved in multiple sports – swimming, soccer, volleyball, and football as well as working full time as a lifeguard for 3 summers. He was also involved in several honor societies – National Honor Society and National Beta Club and served in many leadership positions- Captain of varsity swimming and soccer, President of the National Beta Club. Mason accumulated many volunteer hours with the National Honor Society, National Beta Club, and with Roc Solid Foundation. In addition to being the valedictorian of his class,

he was selected to represent his high school at Boys State as a Virginia Delegate, to attend the US Naval Academy Summer Seminar for 6 days in 2023, and as an AP Scholarship with Honor Award (attained high scores on 5 AP exams).



Naza Agbasi (at left in picture with President CAPT Bruce LaLonde) plans to attend ODU and major in chemistry. She has a 4.2 average and took many honors and DE (several dual enrollment in high school and college) courses. Naza was involved in several sports – field hockey, track and field, and basketball and honor societies – National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society. Some leadership positions included Treasurer of the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society and Sgt at Arms for the Junior Class. She was selected to attend the JCLC summer camp at Va Tech two years in a row and attended the US Naval Academy Summer Seminar. During her 4 years in JROTC, Naza led at every level from Squad Leaders to Battalion XO, participated in the drill team for 3 years and received numerous medals including superior cadet. Her

volunteer activities included many hours with JROTC performing activities like fundraisers, Red Cross blood drives and food box distribution. Naza also volunteered with her church and other activities like the NATO Festival.

PACMOAA again offers our congratulations and best wishes for successful college experiences and military careers to these most accomplished students.

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNITION DINNER 2024!!

PACMOAA was able to utilize the \$300.00 MOAA Community Outreach Sponsorship to help recognize the scholarship winners, their parents and the JROTC Color Guard from Lakeland High School. Again, many thanks to MOAA for their continued generous support through this sponsorship. USAA previously offered this sponsorship. This was the 8th time PACMOAA was awarded this grant!

It was great to see so many PACMOAA members and guests for this special night recognizing the achievements of 4 graduating seniors. Zach Wagner and his parents, Todd and Vicky; Jaden Barnes and his JROTC instructor, Capt. Sacha Fountain, USAF (Ret); and Naza Agbasi and her parents, Grace and Benjamin, were able to join us as was her JROTC instructor, LTC Pete Badoian, USA (Ret) and his daughter, Darby. This was the 3rd time in the past 4 years that a student from Smithfield JROTC was selected as a PACMOAA Scholarship recipient! Unfortunately, Mason Ternes was not able to join us as he was attending his orientation at Univ of FL!



It was a pleasure to talk with such accomplished students, their parents and/or instructors. It was also interesting to have 3 JROTC Instructors attend: LTC Pete Badoian, USA (Ret) from Smithfield High School; new member, CDR Lynn Primeaux, USN (Ret) from Kings Fork High School; and Capt. Sacha Fountain, USAF (Ret) from Lakeland High School.

Picture at Left: L-R: Cpt Fountain, CDR Primeaux, LTC Badoian

The Lakeland High School AFJROTC under the leadership of Capt. Fountain presented colors before the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer. After dinner, Jaden and Zach were introduced to the group, presented PACMOAA Certificates of Appreciation, and then they thanked the members for recognizing their achievements. Naza was introduced and spoke for a few minutes about her goals, thanked the group, and was presented with a Scholarship Certificate. Capt. Fountain then gave an excellent overview of the Lakeland AFJROTC program and their achievements over the past year. Two short legislative virtual briefings followed her presentation: CDR Linc Smith, USN (Ret), VCOC Immediate Past President, gave an overview of VCOC's 2024 Advocacy in Action efforts and COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret), VCOC 3rd VP/Legislative Chair gave an overview of VCOC/JLC efforts in the 2024 Legislative Session including efforts to reinstate VMSDEP.

