

20 CHS Graduates Honored With Oaker Awards

Principal Michael Hobin announced the award recipients at the June 15 Commencement ceremony.

By [Lauren Costa](#) | June 17, 2013



The following sentiments were provided by faculty and staff members who know the nominee best.

"Oaker Awards are presented at graduation to students who bring credit to [CHS](#) by their actions, accomplishments, and behaviors; celebrating those divergent experiences and tales of success," said Hobin. "Oaker nominees are considered by faculty to be well rounded, ethical young men and women. Some of the soon to be named Oakers have overcome great difficulties to be able to cross this stage and graduate. In short, Oaker awardees have given it their all at CHS. They have brought pride to the CHS community in many different ways."

"This award is named in honor of long time Coventry High science teacher, science department chairperson and Student Council Advisor Mr. Ernest DiMicco," Hobin continued. "This year's Oaker Award recipients were nominated and selected by the faculty. I am not surprised that this year, with this great class, we had a record number of ninety-eight nominations."

Melissa Pacheco

Since entering high school Melissa has been an active member of our community. She joined the gymnastics team as a freshman, but unfortunately suffered an injury and was forced to stop competing. Determined to stay connected with the team, she became the team manager to help her fellow gymnasts. Melissa has been a member of our select choir and drama programs, performing in *Emerald Man*, *Hair*, and *Rent*. In her junior year, she was inducted into the National Honor Society and, through our career center nursing program, became a certified nursing assistant. Melissa is also a volunteer for our special needs Reach-Out program, as well as the Special Olympics. Finishing 27th in the class, Melissa will attend Quinnipiac University in September to study nursing.

Patrick Shea

Patrick is an outstanding student, musician, and human being who has made the most of his time here at Coventry High. His intellectual curiosity was born early when he was part of the Student Ambassador program which gave him the opportunity to visit several countries in Europe as a good will ambassador. Music is Pat's passion. He has been an active member of the band, marching band, jazz ensemble, drama club and select choir throughout high school. Patrick has taken the most challenging courses while attending Coventry High, is a member of the National Honor Society, scored a perfect 5 on the AP history exam, a perfect 4 on the NECAP writing assessment, and was a science fair winner. Patrick also scored the highest mark in the Rhode Island Music Educators All-State music program for drum performance. Mozart is no Pat Shea. Finishing tenth in the class, Patrick will attend the University of Rhode Island in September to study music education.

Kassandra LaFazia

Kassie is an active member of our [anti-bullying club N³](#); whose slogan is "not here, not now, not ever". The courageous work the students of the N³ program have done the past two years has been inspiring. Kassie, along with other members of N³, have worked weekly for two years researching, creating, writing, coaching, and teaching fellow students about equality, diversity, and compassion. She has inspired students to join together to stop bullying. Kassie offers random acts of kindness on a daily basis. An accomplished photographer, she is also a recreation league softball player, a member of DECA, and a volunteer at our middle school. Kassie plans to study social work at CCRI and spread the message that kindness is free.

Catherine Cronin

This young lady is never seen without a smile on her face and every conversation with her ends with a thank you. She is always willing to go out of her way to help everyone around her. A few years ago, while on a mission experience, Catherine traveled with her church to the Dominican Republic to build houses. At CHS, Catherine has been equally giving. She has helped to plan class and school events and recently created a Welcome to CHS video for incoming freshmen. In addition, she was a producer of the senior slide show presented at graduation. Catherine has been a class officer, as well as a member of the National, Rhode Island and World Language Honor Societies. She is also an accomplished Irish step

dancer. The next chapter in Catherine's book will begin at the University of Rhode Island in the fall where she plans to study electrical engineering and German.

Brandon Parenteau

From a lively, impulsive 9th grader, to a focused driven 12th grader, Brandon has worked hard to improve his grades and earn honor roll distinction. Brandon is also a kind and respectful young man. He touched the hearts of the entire school community as he befriended a special needs student and became that student's role model. Brandon is an accomplished athlete as well, recently being recognized by Rhode Island Chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame earning the honor of a Silver Scholar Athlete. Brandon's positive energy draws his classmates to him, and his personality is infectious. His teachers and classmates love him and wish him well as he enters the work force.

Zackeary Smith

This young man is the heart of our Unified Basketball program. One can see the excitement build in Zack as the season nears. Over the last three years of the program, Zack has developed into a true team player and he has developed a terrific three-point shot. Zack is very dependable and always offers assistance to his teachers, teacher assistants, and fellow classmates. He has volunteered for many community businesses while developing job skills to benefit him in the future. He advocates for himself and for others and works very hard to succeed. Zack is a young man who brings joy to all who he meets. We look forward to seeing Zack be successful as he enters our transition program in the fall.

Ariel Chapdelaine

Ariel is a quiet and unassuming young woman. She puts 100% into all that she undertakes. She was a driving and motivating force in her advisory helping others to finish their graduation portfolios and certainly did shine in our Culinary Arts program. This year Ariel served as an intern for the Introduction to Culinary class, where she created recipes with students for wellness week and demonstrated the very best in culinary practices. Recently, she was named the 2013 Outstanding Culinary student. Ariel plans to continue her studies in culinary at Johnson and Wales University in the fall.

Megan Quattrucci

Megan is a hard working and dedicated student who gives 100%. She is thoughtful and insightful in her written work and in class discussions. Megan is one of the nicest people to walk the halls of Coventry High School and her spirit and demeanor have endeared her to everyone she comes in contact with. A member of the nursing program at Coventry High, Megan became a certified nursing assistant in her junior year. A member of the National Honor Society, Megan keeps her grades high while holding two part time jobs and serving as captain for the football cheerleading squad. Megan will study nursing at Rhode Island College in the fall.

Zachary Deutsch

Zachary is a big brother to many special needs students in the Town of Coventry. He was a Connections volunteer helping at-risk middle school students learn social skills. Zach was a responsible and dependable asset to the program, often accepting the most difficult assignments. In addition, Zach has been a partner in our Unified Basketball team, ensuring that all athletes get a chance to score and become full members of the team. He volunteered his time during our advisory period as a gym mentor. He likes his image to be that of a tough and serious young man but, in truth, he is wonderfully caring and thoughtful. Zachary was quite impressive as one of ten Rhode Island high school students who served as a representative for the Rhode Island Youth Leadership Council where he advised Attorney General Kilmartin on programming needs for Rhode Island Youth. Zachary will attend Rhode Island College in the fall to study criminal justice.

Marissa Peck

Marissa is an amazing young lady. She has overcome more obstacles than most of us face in a lifetime and she has done this with class and grace. Marissa is a resilient student who is committed to her own personal success, while also recognizing the need to support others. Academically, Marissa has developed exceptional study habits while taking very rigorous courses. A member of the varsity track team, Marissa has learned how to be a great teammate and a leader. Marissa will study biomedical science at the University of New Hampshire in the hopes of becoming a pediatric oncologist.

Stacy Delehanty

Stacy always looks for, and often discovers, the best in people. She is perpetually optimistic and cheerful; always willing to share a kind word with her classmates. Her teachers are impressed with her work ethic, her desire to get all her work right the first time, and her classroom participation. She has a wide smile and an even bigger heart. This year, Stacy was recognized as a most improved student by the Pawtucket Red Sox. This fall she will further her education at the Community College of Rhode Island.

Anthony Rivard

Anthony received the most Oaker nominations of any member of the Class of 2013 and is very deserving of this award. Despite some obstacles, Anthony has achieved great things. Each and every teacher nomination stated that Anthony was one of the most respectful and polite students at CHS. He gained an appreciation for the work of his teachers and showed them gratitude every day. Anthony's Capstone project was a turning point in his high school career. After successfully completing his capstone in Graphic Communications, he knew his diploma was attainable. This hard working young man has brought pride to both his family and his school. I am certain that Anthony will continue to triumph as he pursues a CDL license at a technical training school.

Alaa` Eid and Scott Francis

Both of these students received multiple nominations and each time they were nominated together! For the past four years Scott and Alaa` were committed to making CHS a better place for all students. Best

of friends, together, they were a powerhouse at CHS. During class events and activities, they were determined to include and motivate as many students as possible. Alaa` stood out early in her high school experience as a class leader. Her class schedule and leadership responsibilities as Class President are exhausting. She is not afraid of sharing personal stories during school assemblies to help underclassmen understand the importance of being kind to their peers. She encourages those around her to make good choices, always! She speaks Arabic, Spanish, and is on her way to learning Chinese through the Chinese Flagship Program at URI where this fall she will major in Bio-Medical engineering.

Scott is the face of the graduating class of 2013. Most would say it is quite a handsome face as he was voted by his peers as the Junior Prom King. When there is a job to be done, and done well, he is the go-to guy. This young man could sell a bottle of Poland Springs to the CEO of Aquafina. Throughout his four years, Scott has worked hard to break down social barriers. He was a member of the soccer team and was named captain during his senior year. He took great strides forward in becoming a respected leader of the team. He never discouraged a younger player from taking a risk; rather, he would dismiss any pressure on them and encourage them to try until they reached success. He was a highly respected player and leader of the team and has truly left a legacy of unity and enthusiasm for future players on the soccer team. Scott has just scratched the surface of his ability. Academically he has excelled in the area of science and will pursue a nursing degree at Endicott College.

Zachary Szymkowicz

It has been a joy to have Zachary at Coventry High School. A three sport athlete, Zachary has been a member of the cross country, indoor and outdoor track teams. Zach has been active in his classes social activities by serving on the social committee and as a regular contributor to our school newspaper, *The Entry*. Zach has also earned high or highest honors in each quarter of high school. He has been an advocate for Coventry High School by testifying for improved conditions at our recent bond information sessions. Zachary challenged himself this year by successfully taking a rigorous online course in Advanced Placement environmental science in our Virtual High School program. Zachary shared the benefits and challenges of on-line learning with our Leadership team in an attempt to shape new policies and practices for future students. Zach will attend Assumption College to study neuroscience this fall.

Katina Gustafson

Katina consistently demonstrates the qualities of an Oaker. She has true school spirit, is kind, helpful, hardworking, motivated, and charitable. A student in the Early Childhood program in the Regional Career and Technical Center, she has been an active member of Skills USA. She has also been involved in the art club, cross country team, indoor track and tennis team. Katina never gives up or settles for anything less than her best; often insisting on revising her work until it exceeds the standard. Her positive attitude is contagious. Katina is a quiet force to be reckoned with. In the fall, Katina will study art education at Rhode Island College.

Derek Huffman

Derek has made great strides at Coventry High School. To say that Derek has grown and matured over the last four years would be an understatement. A few years back when he realized he had to make a choice, he made the right one. If there is one person in this class that has come to value opportunities, be thankful for those who support him, and appreciate family it is Derek Huffman. Several public speaking events, including his Capstone presentation, have showcased his confidence and his ability to address people on a sincere and genuine level. He has charisma that commands attention. I will be forever grateful for Derek's kind and heartfelt words he recently spoke on my behalf. There is a saying that when the boy meets the man he is going to become....that is a good day. For Derek, that day has arrived. We wish him well as he decides whether to continue his studies or to enter the world of work.

Gianna Rocchio

Gianna is the most humble student athlete at Coventry High School. Affectionately known as G-Rock, she is ranked 4th in her class and is an all-state runner who has competed at the national level. Gianna has maintained highest honors, is a member of the National and Rhode Island Honor Societies, was a Rhode Island National History Day winner, and earned the highest possible score on her AP history exam. This year she served as an intern to the AP history program. What sets G-Rock apart is her warmth and kindness. Simply stated, Gianna is a fine young lady and symbolizes everything that is right about teenagers today. Gianna will study biology at Connecticut College in the fall.

Alexander St. Pierre

Alex has been involved in many diverse activities while at CHS, including the health occupations program, drama club, football team, the band, Air Force Junior ROTC, and SkillsUSA. During his involvement in SkillsUSA, Alex held a state officer position. He has competed three times in Skills USA, winning a silver medal in his sophomore year and a gold medal for community service in his senior year. Shortly he will be traveling to Kansas City to compete on the National SkillsUSA level. Alex created the [“Bags of Dignity” program](#) designed to provide back packs and supplies to children in foster care. His program has been adopted in many districts across our state and the country. This program acknowledgement was the first official tweet on the [@CoventryOakers twitter page](#). Alex will attend CCRI this fall.

Tyler Vigeant

Saying Tyler is a whirlwind does not capture the character that is Tyler. Watching Tyler grow and develop into a self-confident, goal oriented young man has been a pleasure. Tyler has never wavered in his dedication and desire to attend college after high school. He has been a vital member of the drama program; starring in almost all of the school plays and productions throughout his years at Coventry High. His hard work and creativity have made him a valued member of this organization. In addition, Tyler was recently recognized for his outstanding achievements in English at our Senior Awards Night and is a member of the [N³ club](#). He is beloved by the faculty and student body and was elected Homecoming King this past fall. Tyler puts a smile on the face of everyone he comes into contact with;



often offering a kind word or a hilarious story. He will be missed in September when he enters Rhode Island College to study animation.