

FUTURE LEADERS

Coventry Teachers' Alliance awards over \$100,000 in scholarships at 38th annual Scholarship Fund Award Night

By KENDRA PORT

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COVENTRY — The Coventry Teachers' Alliance gave away \$100,000 in scholarships last week to 112 local students at the 38th annual CTA Scholarship Fund Award Night, showing a significant investment in Coventry's future.

The CTA Scholarship Fund was created in 1978 to help high school seniors with their education. In their first year the CTA awarded six scholarships in the amount of \$1,800. In 1981 they started the cooperative scholarship donor program and handed out 10 scholarships totaling \$8,000. School department staff, both active and retired, make bi-weekly contributions to the fund throughout the year which match the donations of other local businesses and organizations. To date, over three decades, the CTA has awarded more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to students in Coventry.

Mariah Rietzel, Audrey Buffi, Robert Thayer, Lauren Deus, Nicholas Wallbank, Alexis Buffi, Meghan Plumley, Hector Rivera, Lauren Jacobs, Hayden Whitten and Julia D'Antico all received \$2,000 cooperative scholarships which were equally matched by the CTA Scholarship Fund. More than 50 students received \$1,000 cooperative scholarships, and another 50 students took home \$500 scholarships during the April 10 ceremony at Coventry High School.

"It is one of our proudest nights," said CTA President Kelly Erinakes. "It's something we love doing for the kids. It's our favorite way to give back."

According to Erinakes, the CTA has given away about \$100,000 consecutively for the past several years. Without all of the contributors, including school staff and businesses and organizations in the community, the scholarship night would not be possible.

"It's everyone from teach-



Submitted Photos

Above: Coventry High School Senior Victoria Raposo accepts her award of \$500 from the CTA and RI Pink Heals. Below: Coventry High School Principal Michael Hobin presents Joseph Pelletier III with \$500 on behalf of the CTA and the Coventry Professional Firefighters Association.

ers to clerks, secretaries, custodians, all of us collectively doing a payroll deduction," she said. "Without everyone doing it we would never be able to give \$100,000. It truly is a collective effort."

"It's a great positive night," said Coventry Superintendent Craig Levis. "It shows the investment into the community, investment in our the youth. You can see the pride in the kids' faces. For some of the families, it's in memory of a loved one, and it's so important to keep that presence alive. It's a very powerful night."

The scholarships are open to any Coventry High School senior pursuing post-secondary education from an accredited school, college or university. Winners are chosen by lottery at a public drawing. In order to be eligible for a \$1,000 or \$2,000 scholarship, students must have a minimum 4.0 grade point average after the first seven semesters of high school.

The program for the evening lists all of the scholar-



ship recipients as well as the their scholarship donors and who the donors donated in memory of.

The Coventry Teachers' Alliance Scholarship Fund Committee is made up of

Jennifer Beauchemin, Maria Boulmetis, Tara D'Aleno, Kelly Erinakes, Elaine Guillette, Paula Jacquard,

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Submitted Photo
 Parents take photos of the 112 scholarship winners selected by the Coventry Teachers' Alliance on April 10 at Coventry High School.



Submitted Photo
 Coventry Teachers' Alliance President Kelly Erinakes speaks to the crowd at the 38th annual scholarship night.

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Heather Murgida, Robin Petrarca, Raymond Raboin, Susan Smith, Susan Toohy-Kaye, Suzanne Tracy and Gregory Wightman.

It is the hope of teachers and district staff that this investment in students will eventually be returned to the

community.
 "It's a spectacular night where the community rallies around and shows our true appreciation for the students," said Erinakes. "Kids are our future. We really, truly believe that, and we want to get them off on the right start. I think the kids truly appreciate it."

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