



Evelyn's Wishes

Newsletter of the MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation, Inc.

Helping Lyme and Old Lyme students afford college

As students who applied for financial aid this year will attest, the rollout of the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application was not free of confusion and delays. It was, in fact, a major headache. Nonetheless, students got through the application process and the MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation awarded 27 grants to students graduating from LOLHS this year: 6 students from Lyme and 21 from Old Lyme.

Including ongoing grants to students who graduated from Lyme–Old Lyme High School since 2019, this year a record amount of \$427,500 was granted to 97 students across 5 classes. The average award per student is just under \$4,600. The grants continue as long as recipients meet the GPA requirement and maintain Lyme or Old Lyme as their residence. During this past academic year, students did very well overall. For the latest completed semester, the average GPA was 3.50, with 82% of GPAs above 3.0.

The annual reception for this year's award winners was

held on June 18 at the Lyme Art Association. The reception also honored three graduating seniors with achievement awards: Agatha Hunt received the W.E.S. Griswold Class Valedictorian Award in honor of W.E.S. Griswold, the Foundation President from 1965 to 1992; and Ella Curtiss-Reardon received the Class Salutatorian award in honor of Willis Umberger, the Secretary/Treasurer from 1966 to 1986. Grace Zembruski received the Rowland Ballek Leadership Award, established in recognition of Rowland Ballek's service as the Foundation President from 2002 to 2022.

The Foundation welcomed three new members at the 131st annual meeting on September 10: Mark Fader, Day Halsey, and Tom Ressler. The Executive Board members were re-elected: Fred Behringer as President, Mary Seidner as Vice President, Judith Read as Treasurer, and Leslie Massa as Secretary. Katie Gingras began supporting the Foundation as Administrative Manager at the start of 2024, filling that position upon Ned Perkins' retirement. ■



Class of 2024 Award Recipients: Front row seated: Agatha Hunt, Kate Mullaney, Luisa Raby, Grace Phaneuf, Emma Cook. Standing: Grace Zembruski, Brodie Lippincott, Mason Freer, Mohamad Hamou, Harry Whitten, Owen Snurkowski, Jordan Hanes, Abby Hale, Dylan Paynter, Audrey LeCour, Sedona Holland, Ryder Goss, Mila Lopes, Kalea VanPelt, Peighton Andrews.

MacCurdy PROFILE



Miles Jaques Haskins: Great Teachers Inspired His Musical Career

When Miles Jaques Haskins started the seventh grade in Killingworth, Connecticut, he arrived late to his first band class. He looked for a saxophone, the instrument he had played in elementary school, but there were only two instruments left. The teacher showed him his choices: a big case, and a small case. Miles pointed to the small case—thinking of his mile-long driveway, uphill from the school bus drop-off. The smaller instrument seemed like the better choice. It turned out that inside the small case was a clarinet, and Miles took to it right away. It was a natural fit and having a musical outlet was essential during this unsettled time in his life. (The larger case contained a bass clarinet, which he later learned as well.)

When Miles moved to Old Lyme the following year and started the eighth grade, he met music teacher Elizabeth Smith and Jay Wilson, the band director; both of them encouraged and inspired him. Even in high school,

Miles said, “I had dreams of playing the clarinet for my career but I had no idea what that meant at the time. I knew I had only a one percent chance of getting a job—hundreds of people apply for one position. Jay Wilson was very helpful and my private clarinet teacher Julie helped me.” Wilson had had a performance career himself and told Miles, “You can do this, but you’ve got to really work your butt off.”

In addition to playing in all the bands in Lyme-Old Lyme High School, taking private lessons, and practicing, Miles still had time for other things: “Summers on the beach, bonfires, stopping at Coffee’s for a sandwich. I had great friends—I’m still in touch with some. People in Old Lyme were so welcoming. My teachers were just unbelievable. I worked at a little farmer’s market on Shore Road—my first job.”

After completing his first year at Ithaca College, Miles transferred to the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, where his musical journey flourished. Following his studies at Peabody, he pursued further training at the Mannes School of Music, studying under the principal clarinetist of the Metropolitan Opera. Reflecting on this pivotal mentorship, Miles recalls, “He had a huge influence on my life—my artistry, my career. He pushed me in ways that I had never been pushed before.”

Miles’s career gained momentum when he was accepted into the esteemed fellowship program at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach.

A turning point came when he learned that two clarinetists in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra were departing. Seizing the opportunity, Miles was offered a one-year position, which became permanent the following year after a competitive audition. Today, with eight years under his belt, he remains a vital member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Teaching has become increasingly important to Miles over the last few years. When music students reached

out to him, he enjoyed giving them tips on technique; then some young clarinetists asked for regular lessons. “Now I’m finding that teaching is what I enjoy the most. If someone has a musical or technical difficulty on the clarinet, it’s fun to be able to diagnose what the issue is—what’s exactly happening, what is wrong, and how you can make it better. When that happens, the student’s face lights up. It’s an amazing feeling. It’s intoxicating.” Miles’s talent for teaching eventually led to faculty positions, first at the University of Toronto, then a second teaching position at the Royal Conservatory of Music. “I’m so fortunate to wake up every day and love what I do for a living.”



Miles also coaches chamber music, plays in orchestral repertoire, and has enjoyed being a guest musician in major orchestras in Canada and the United States. A special treat has been seeing some of his first teachers in the audience. “Jay Wilson came to a concert when I was playing with the New York Philharmonic.” When he was in Connecticut recently, he had dinner with his middle school music teacher, Elizabeth Smith; they had eighteen years to catch up on.

When asked if he has any advice for high school students trying to figure out what direction to take for careers, Miles had some suggestions. “Although I painted a picture of having a lot of support, I did have some strong

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A Note from the President

Funds from Reduction of Operating Expenses Redirected to Student Grants



First off, a big thanks from the MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation to our loyal supporters in the Lyme and Old Lyme community. During this past year we saw a sizable increase in the total number of donors. Our heartfelt welcome to new supporters. Contributions

are greatly appreciated and essential for enabling Foundation grants to keep up with rising college costs.

2024 began with some trepidation for the Foundation. As announced last year, Ned Perkins retired at the end of 2023. Ned served as the Administrative Manager and had responsibility for much of the Foundation's operations. Fortunately, the Foundation found a very capable successor to Ned: Katie Gingras, who started January 1 and has been doing an outstanding job as she takes on management of the student grants. We are delighted to introduce her in the adjacent column.

A major focus this year was reducing operating expenses. The 30% reduction achieved by the Foundation redirected \$30,000 to student aid. This contributed to increasing grants to a record amount—from around \$400,000 to \$430,000. Almost 100 students will receive support for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Finally, I thank departing board members for their service to the Foundation: Jennifer Burke and Paula Gaudet (both Regional School District 18 representatives), and Kevin McGlinchey and Tom Richardson who completed two 3-year terms. We welcome new board members Ben Merris and Ramzi Dagher along with Christie Williams-Kahn, RSD 18's new representative on the board. And a final thanks to fellow executive team members Mary Seidner, Jude Read and Leslie Massa for all they do to help run the Foundation. ■

Meet New Administrative Manager Katie Gingras

We'd like to give a warm welcome to Katie Gingras, the new Administrative Manager for the MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation. Prior to her new role, Katie was a member of the Foundation, so she is familiar with some of its inner workings.

Katie has been learning the myriad details of the position from former Administrative Manager Ned Perkins, as well as Vice President Mary Seidner and financial consultant Sean Martin. She enjoys the fact that there are so many different kinds of tasks to manage and juggle. "One of my favorite parts of the job is getting to know the students—through the questionnaires they fill out as well as lots of back and forth communication." Katie also hopes that students know that the Foundation gives out student grants for trade schools as well as college. She feels that it's important that the grant money is given directly to the students, rather than to the schools they're attending. "The Foundation makes a direct impact on students' lives."

After growing up in central New York, Katie graduated from Colgate University and pursued a career as a project manager in publishing with Inc., Forbes, and KingFish Media. She has lived in Old Lyme for thirteen years with her husband, Patrick and two children: Connor, sixteen, and Annie, thirteen, both students at The Williams School in New London.

Katie has volunteered for various Shoreline organizations including the Lymes' Youth Service Bureau and Mile Creek PTO. She is currently president of The Williams School Parents Association. Katie can often be found driving up and down I-95, cheering on her son Connor at cross country meets, or bundled up in cold hockey rinks watching her daughter Annie. When she finds time for herself, she enjoys playing tennis and running. Though her age bracket keeps increasing, she loves the race! ■



Miles Jaques Haskins continued influences in my life trying to tell me *not* to do this. People I respect, even family and teachers, thought that a career in music was a bad idea. It is a risk, but life is a risk. It was my grandfather who told me, 'You've carved out a niche for yourself. You should pursue this.' My advice to anyone young is: if you love something, pursue it, and trust your gut. You know yourself best, even though you may not know the path forward."

"Remember, no one succeeds without help. If you see someone in the community who can help you, even a professional, reach out, have a conversation, a cup of coffee, bring them lunch—and talk. You don't have to do this on your own. I wouldn't be where I am now without six major teachers in my life—including Mrs. Smith and Mr. Wilson—and countless others to help me along the way, whether it be a master class or a chat. Getting help doesn't diminish your own work or your own talent. ■



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The MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation has a long-standing tradition of providing financial support to local students going on to further their education at colleges and universities after their high-school years. Founded by Evelyn MacCurdy Salisbury in 1893, the Foundation was originally named the Lyme High School Association, and helped support educational activities in Old Lyme. It began giving direct grants to students from Old Lyme to continue their education beyond high school in 1918.

In 1939, the name was changed to the MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation. In 1973 Berenice Brevillier started the Lyme portion of the fund at the Foundation so students from both towns—the majority of whom attend the Regional District 18 school system—could participate. In 2016 the Old Lyme and Lyme funds merged to better serve students from both towns.

MacCurdy Salisbury Educational Foundation, Inc. 2024-2025 Membership

Officers	Year Joined
Fred Behringer, President	2016
Mary Seidner, Vice-President	2000
Judith Read, Treasurer	2011
Leslie Massa, Secretary	2000

Board of Directors

Cyndi Miller Aird	2019	Michael Ganey	2019
Matthew Cantner	2008	Ben Merris	2022
Ramzi Dagher	2022	Thomas Sherer	1997

Board of Education Representatives

Jon Goss	2022	Christie Williams-Kahn	2024
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Foundation Members

Steven Arnes	2004	David Kelsey	2017
Christopher Arnold	2007	Kevin McGlinchey	2017
Arnanda Baker	2023	Steven Olstein	2019
Rowland Ballek	1975	John Pfeiffer	2005
Nicki Berry	2008	Tom Ressler	2024
Rev. Rebecca Crosby	2005	Thomas Richardson	2016
Winnie Bing Edmed	2015	Matthew Sharp	2013
Mark Fader	2024	David Speirs	1981
James Fairfield-Sonn	2013	C. Michael Walker	1996
Rev. Carleen Gerber	1986	Kathryn Reynolds Wayland	2023
Leslie Gourlay	2011		
Evan Griswold	2012	Ned Perkins	
Timothy Griswold	1975	<i>Member Emeritus</i>	1986
Mary Guitar	2022	Thomas McGarry, Esq.,	
Gregory Hack	2003	<i>Legal Advisor</i>	1969
Day Halsey	2024	Kate Gingras	
Susan Hessel	2005	<i>Administrative Manager</i>	2019