

Life *in the* Valley

sanews@salem.gannett.com



ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Student honorees listen to the presentation during the Statesman Journal's Academic All-Stars celebration reception at Corban University in Salem.

Students honored for adacemics

GORDON FRIEDMAN
STATESMAN JOURNAL

More than 60 students and their families attended the 23rd annual Statesman Journal Academic All-Stars event Sunday at Corban University. The event honors Mid-Valley high school students who excel in and out of the classroom.

Statesman Journal Executive Editor Michael Davis, who emceed, said seeing all the bright pupils made him “very optimistic about the future of our nation.”

Awards are presented at the event to the top junior and senior at each Mid-Valley high school — 66 stars in total. Students were nominated by their school as exemplary students. Each submitted a response to the essay prompt: What is going on in your life, your community or the world today that your high school classes don’t really address?

Four area colleges — Willamette University, Western Oregon University, Corban University and Chemeketa Community College — pledged \$2,000 annual scholarships to each student that qualifies for admission. Representatives from those four institutions were there to give the all-stars advice about succeeding in college.

“Your achievements show you’ve worked hard for an exciting education journey,” said Jim Eustrom, vice president at Chemeketa Community College. “You’re worthy and that’s why you’re here.”

Michael Beseda, vice president of enrollment at Willamette University, said that college students should get involved on campus, whether that’s through a club, the arts or an internship.

Dr. Rex Fuller, president of Western Oregon University, had one piece of advice for the students: “Go to college and graduate.” Fuller said students

thinking about college should realize the experience is about learning and exploring. Having a vision of success is key, he said, along with adapting to changing circumstances.

Dr. Matt Lucas, provost and executive vice president at Corban University, said students should consider a college’s mission when making their decision about where to attend.

A short bio of each student was read aloud as they came up to the stage to accept their award. Some want to be scientists or medical practitioners who help change the world with their experiments or healing treatments. Others plan to make the world better through art, music or literature. Others seek to master the art of the deal and become the next leaders in business.

“It’s an honor,” said Emily Vela, 18, a senior at St. Paul High School. “It was cool to be up there” with so many other impressive students, she said.

Vela, who has a 4.0 grade-point-average,

is the president of her school’s Future Business Leaders of America chapter, a member of the National Honor Society, and a three-sport athlete who wants to earn a degree in accounting.

“It’s cool to be recognized for all the hard work we did,” said Crosshill Christian School senior Matthew Gille, 18. “It takes a lot of work to do well like this,” added Crosshill junior Hannah Schanz, 17. Gille said he plans to attend Liberty University after graduating from high school, in the hopes of eventually becoming a pediatrician.

The event closed with a speech from Davis, who reminded the all-stars that with the help of others, they can change the world for the better. He reminded them of the words from Star Wars character and Jedi master Yoda: “There is no try — only do.”

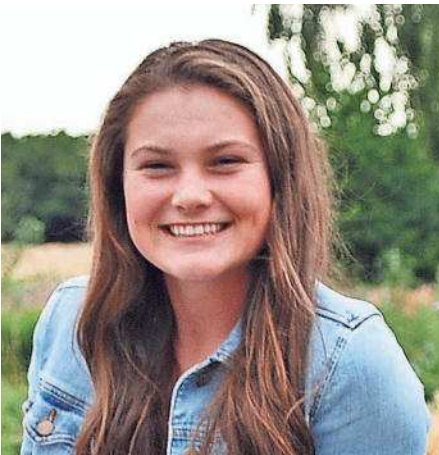
gfriedman2@states-manjournal.com, 503-399-6653. Follow Gordon on Twitter @gordonrfriedman.



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John F. Kennedy High School Junior: Rheannon Hernandez

Essay excerpt: Since I am going into the medical field I would like to add a hands-on patient care class.

Parents: Nikki Ellison and Daniel Hernandez

GPA: 3.67

Class Rank: 14 out of 48

Activities: Softball, volleyball, peer education, blood drive coordinator, Habitat for Humanity

College: I am interested in Linfield, George Fox, Arizona State, Chemeketa or Southern Oregon University.

Career goal: Nurse practitioner

John F. Kennedy High School Senior: John Inoue

Essay excerpt: There is a great need for people to get along with each other and with our planet; to increase empathy and understanding in order to decrease issues like violence, world hunger, and racial discrimination.

Parents: Margaret and Hidetaka Inoue

GPA: 4.0

Class Rank: 1 out of 49

Activities: Library volunteer, future health professionals, baseball

College: I have applied to Amherst College, Lewis & Clark College, Oberlin

Silverton High School Junior: Megan Mannion

Essay excerpt: A class devoted strictly to ethics would benefit students, as it would challenge them to look beyond the surface of actions. They would learn to not simply accept the status quo, but to analyze whether or not an action is just. Ethics provoke meaningful, in-depth conversations which are crucial for high school students as they develop and defend their own points-of-view. Such a course would require research, writing, speaking, and listening.

Parents: Inga and John Mannion

GPA: 4.0

Class Rank: 1 out of 325

Activities: Leadership, Interact Club, National Honor Society, volleyball, softball

College: I am going to apply to Oregon State University, University of California Santa Barbara, University of Notre Dame and University of Colorado, Boulder.

Career goal: Energy or Environmental Engineering

Silverton High School Senior: Kirk Martinson

Essay excerpt: At Silverton High School, current world events tend to be left out of the curriculum. I believe a class should be created at Silverton High School, and high schools nationwide, to constantly increase awareness in the student body of the challenges our world faces today.

Parents: Valerie and Jamie Martinson

GPA: 4.0

Class Rank: 1 out of 263

Activities: Soccer, basketball, baseball, Link Crew, National Honor Society, youth group

College: Applied to Stanford University, Vanderbilt University and Princeton University. Accepted at Oregon State University.

Career goal: Biomedical engineering or mechanical engineering