

LAKE PLACID NEWS

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Caleb Mihill wins Rotary Club's first Tina Leonard Award



2022 Lake Placid High School graduate Caleb Mihill was the first senior to win the Tina Leonard Award from the Rotary Club of Lake Placid. (Photo provided)

The Tina Leonard Award was established by the Rotary Club of Lake Placid, Tina's family and dozens of donors in memory of the late and great Tina Leonard, who passed away last year. I was the first to be recognized for the Tina Leonard Award, and it means the world to me, the universe, rather.

Tina was thrown many obstacles in her life and overcame them all while still giving back to the community. Her strength, tenacity, love and service is something everyone should strive to match because she was truly an amazing woman who made a difference. The recipient of this new annual award is a Lake Placid Central School District senior who, similarly to Tina, has or is overcoming obstacles in their life.

Tina and I had a friendship like no other. In my high school career, I helped her with projects, talked with her on the phone and was recognized by the Rotary Club for work I did in school for our weekly news program, the "*Blue Bomber Weekly News*." I even volunteered for several years at the "*Dam Duck Race*" that Tina founded and co-chaired, when I was in elementary school.

Last month at the senior awards ceremony, when I was called to the stage by Tina's son and daughter, my heart was filled with so much love and happiness because of the history and relationship I had with Tina. I was overjoyed and was even more ecstatic when I learned that the essays and applications had no names attached to them. The family read the essays and all agreed that mine in particular was the one who deserved the award.

Despite having a wonderful friendship with Tina, I received the award not because of that, but for my unique story of how I have and continue to overcome many obstacles that are thrown my way in order to achieve my dreams. Ironically, Tina never knew about the obstacles I faced.

This award will aid me in my endeavors and help me work toward my dream of making the world a better place than when I entered it. I am heading to Hilbert College this fall, and this award will help with my goal of getting a degree in digital media and communication. With this degree, I

degree, I would like to be a reporter or anchor who follows the stories around the globe and pursues the truth in every story. I would also like to make impactful, meaningful films that give the audience a message or make them reflect on life and hopefully make them better people or feel whole in a way they didn't prior to entering the theater.

This award has been such a gift to me in so many different ways, from being special because of my wonderful friendship with incredible Tina, to helping fund my dream of helping the world. Thank you to the Rotary Club, Joseph Leonard, Daci Shenfield, and most importantly Tina Leonard. Thank you for the laughs, smiles and memories. You will forever be in my heart.

(Caleb Mihill is a 2022 graduate of the Lake Placid High School.)
