



The Rotary Club of Montgomery/Rocky Hill

Since the club's founding in 1990, members of the Montgomery/Rocky Hill Rotary Club has offered their personal time to people in need and have raised over a million dollars for worthwhile local, national and international causes. The members of the Montgomery/Rocky Hill Rotary Club are men and women who live and/or work in the community - your friends, neighbors, and business associates. We are a volunteer organization with a motto of "Service Above Self." Our service is generally done behind the scenes and always with the goal of making a difference in the lives of others. The MHS Scholarship Program has been a cornerstone of our giving since 1990.

2024 Montgomery/Rocky Hill Rotary Scholarship Recipients

Rotary Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 - awarded to students continuing their education in a four-year college or university, two-year community college, and/or vo-tech program. Among other factors, community service, achievement, work history, and/or potential for future achievement are considered.

Chloe Fitzpatrick takes great pride in her preparation for events. She shared with the Scholarship Selection Committee one situation when her basketball teammate forgot her sneakers for practice. To her shoeless teammate's amazement, Chloe said she had a second pair of sneakers in her locker and offered them for use.

Chloe has been very active in basketball serving as Team Captain, softball, and as an athletic trainer's assistant in all four years of high school. She volunteers her time to youth basketball camps, athletic training, and theatre productions. Also, of note is her thoughtfulness in making custom craft items for teachers who are expecting children. She volunteers with the Montgomery United Club and the MHS athletic trainers. Chloe is a National Honor Society member too.

Chloe will be attending Rowan University in the fall where she will pursue a Master of Science degree in Athletic Training. Chloe's career aspirations have been greatly influenced by MHS athletic trainers whose guidance and skills she wishes to emulate.

Krish Gupta is a very talented programmer who is looking to meld his passion for computing with his passion for Global information systems in order to build models that will better forecast the effects of natural disasters. With solid forecasting, more proactive preventive safety measures can be taken beforehand to mitigate the impact of natural disasters. If you are in need a Trivial Pursuit partner, Krish is your man as he has been Captain of the Quizbowl Team and President of the Academic League. He placed fifth in the entire United States in the International Geography Bee. He has been a four-year member of both the MHS Track & Field and Cross Country Teams.

Outside of school, Krish is an instructor and has a Black Belt in TaeKwon Do. He is involved in Highpointing where he is on a mission to hike the highest peaks in all fifty states. (He has completed fourteen so far.) Krish is a published author and works at the Bent Spoon where he gets his creative juices and ice cream creations flowing!

Krish will be attending the University of Illinois in the fall majoring in Computer Science with a minor in Global Information Systems.

Julia Paladini has shared her enjoyment of art, including painting, sculpture and making miniature houses, with many students. She has volunteered with the Arts Council of Princeton and Art Sparks in Hopewell. She has also volunteered with two theater programs, serving as the stage manager assistant for the Montgomery Middle School Summer Theater Program and as a program assistant for the Cambridge School in Pennington. In these theater programs, she contributed to building the sets, moved backdrops and props during scene changes and helped with costume changes.

Volunteering at Capital Health and her high school anatomy teacher combined to influence her keen interest in pathology, so much so that she aspires to be a pathology assistant.

Julia is attending Mercer County Community College in the fall where she will study Pathology.

Krishan Patel is an extremely hard-working young man who gives selflessly to his community and family. As a Varsity football player his freshman through junior years (sidelined by an injury his senior year), he helped lead team meetings and received the Academic All-American Award in 2023. At MHS, Krishan also participated in Health Occupations Students of America, Model UN and Youth & Government, as well as the National Honor Society.

For two years, Krishan has served as an Emergency Medical Technician with Montgomery EMS. Through that service, he has developed adaptability, communication skills, empathy and an ability to stay calm under pressure.

Elsewhere in the community, Krishan was the social media manager for the Township Board of Health, and a long-time volunteer at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir temple where he has coordinated blood drives and taught Hinduism to students. He also puts in about thirty hours/week as a Shop-Rite Hillsborough cashier.

Krishan is attending the University of Pittsburgh where he intends to study Neuroscience, and also continue as an EMT.

Gianna Schembari is a most resilient and warm-hearted young lady.

As a twelve-year Girl Scout, Gianna has earned the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards, and come to truly understand the meaning of being “considerate and caring,” and striving to “make the world a better place,” both being elements of the Girl Scout Law. Both her Silver and Gold projects were focused on improving the quality of life for senior citizens. She started her Silver Project shortly before the pandemic; but those ‘best-laid’ plans had to be shelved due to pandemic restrictions. Learning that Stonebridge residents were in need of face masks, she pivoted and initiated a very public drive to provide hand-made face masks to every single resident. She created sewing instructions for making masks, made them herself, collected them from others and, ultimately delivered more than enough masks for every single Stonebridge resident.

Her appreciation for seniors was also the driver for her Gold Award. Working with the Montgomery Lower Middle School Interact students, she showed them the joy she has in volunteering with seniors and how they could also volunteer. Stonebridge has been so impressed with Gianna that she was hired as a Healthcare Administrative Assistant. For two years she has also volunteered as a Senior Shopper for Jewish Family Services of Somerset County.

At MHS, Gianna has been a four-year member and captain of the Stage Crew, working closely with Peter Kauzmann. Gianna has also led the Upper Middle School Stage Crew for three years. Her other MHS activities include Student Council and Red Cross Club.

Gianna is entering Sacred Heart University this fall where she will study Nursing.

Gloria Yao is motivated by her love of science, children and swimming, and she has combined these diverse interests in many ways to serve others. As the founder of Fem N STEM, Gloria manages outreach for free tutoring, and coordinates volunteers. As a Lead Stream Watcher for the Watershed Institute she tests waterways and teaches children about environmental health. As the Vice President of Smiles for a Child, an organization that supports children with illnesses, Gloria organizes club meetings and coordinates the club’s activities with local hospitals. And, as a varsity swimmer, Gloria leads her teammates in practices and fosters an encouraging, inclusive team culture.

Gloria is a swim instructor at Hillsborough YMCA where she has guided young and senior swimmers alike, as well as swimmers with developmental challenges and from whom Gloria believes she learned communication skills and patience. Gloria also works as a cashier at the Maruichi Japanese Food & Deli.

Today, it’s hard to conceive of Gloria as the shy ESL student she told the Scholarship Committee she once was.

Summer study at Yale’s O’Hern Lab discovering potential applications of man-made bulk metallic glass metals will surely enhance her studies at Cornell this fall, where she intends to major in Materials Engineering and minor in Business.

Ella Zelesnick is a dedicated Girl Scout, volunteer Special Olympics coach, and member of MHS Unified Club, who finds Rotary's attributes of service and leadership to be most meaningful.

(Excepting the very last bit of paperwork,) Ella has completed her Girl Scout Gold Award project. For her project, she worked with local youth living in low and moderate income-restricted housing. She developed and led them in sustainable, fun, and enriching activities.

As a member of the MHS United Club, Ella plans activities for students with special needs and learning disabilities, joins in the activities and creates an inclusive, positive environment for all students.

For the past three years, Ella has been a volunteer coach with Special Olympics. In this role, she both coaches and plays sports with developmentally disabled adults, and builds connections with the athletes.

Ella holds down two jobs. She manages the register and phones at Lucy's Kitchen and Market, and leads children in party activities at the Chirp Workshop in Flemington. She has found work to be a great way to learn how to get things done.

Ella has a deep connection to outdoor beautiful spaces, aroused by her (local) grandmother Nancy Rude, that inspires Ella to become a landscape architect. Ella will join the ranks of the Nittany Lions and attend Penn State this fall where she will study Landscape Architecture.

Harry Fenton Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 - awarded to a student continuing his/her education who exemplifies Harry Fenton's benevolence, indefatigable spirit, and warmth.

Jack Markowski is a kind, creative, hard-working, musically talented, entrepreneurial young man, who, like Harry, is capable of great empathy. Jack didn't let the pandemic impact his involvement in high school activities. He was a four-year member of Stage Crew, eventually becoming the Build Captain. Jack was also an active member of the music program where he was a member of the MHS Honors Chamber Choir, Tenor Bass Ensemble and the Men's Ensemble. Jack also plays guitar and composes music.

Jack's work with the MHS Stage Crew and Peter Kauzmann taught him the importance of hard work, flexibility and team work, through which a creative idea is transformed into a high-quality finished product. This experience not only developed Jack's skills as a tradesman, but he also built great friendships and memories for a lifetime.

From a very young age, Jack was involved in The Dance Factory Tour Team where several times a year he traveled to assisted living homes, memory care centers, nursing homes, senior centers, community events and the veterans hospital to visit, perform, and share his love of music with hundreds. Bringing joy through music during the holidays and summer months was an important part of building Jack's interest in giving back to the community.

Those who had the great fortune to know Harry know (at least) three things about him: (1) he was a world traveler who loved meeting new people and experiencing new cultures, and in today's time, might be regarded as a "global citizen," (2) he always looked out for the underdog, and (3) his experience hosting Yumi as a Rotary exchange student was transformational. Having served in World War II, he had no love for Japanese people; yet decades after the war, that perspective changed when Yumi entered his life. Jack emulates the very best of Harry.

Through the interview process, the committee gleaned how Jack evolved from a shy, new MHS student to a confident leader willing to try new things, get involved, and make a difference in the lives of others.

Jack is attending the Seton Hall University, Stillman School of Business where he will pursue a Major in Finance and Technology.

Yumi Shibatani Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 - awarded to a student pursuing a degree at a four year college or university. Achievement, extra-curricular activities, and the individual's potential for achieving Yumi Shibatani's goal of "building bridges" between peoples is weighed.

Catherine Petrozzini is the consummate mixer of lemonade from lemons, always served half-full. Her boundless optimism and mature insight into humanity are qualities that will not only carry her far, but lift all those around her. What others might view as negative experiences, Catherine sees as opportunities to learn about others and herself.

With her faith-based youth group, Catherine traveled to Guatemala where she helped build "bottle schools" with recycled plastic material. Working alongside the Panimache people enabled Catherine to immerse herself in their culture and bond with them. Through her youth group, Catherine has also served at a food pantry, cleaned parks, visited a homeless shelter, and assisted pre-school children.

An athlete, Catherine has been a varsity defensive starter for the MHS Lacrosse team for four years. In this capacity, she models diligence and teamwork for her teammates. She has also played with a club team for several years, travelling to many states. Catherine served as the statistician for the MHS football team for two years. Catherine was invited to be a Peer Leader at MHS, and in this capacity, guides younger high school students in their adjustment to high school life.

She maintains two steady work commitments – a hostess at the Peasant Grill and summer camp counsellor for Fal Rooney Camp.

Catherine will be studying early and elementary education, and special education at Loyola University this fall. Her warm, bright smile will surely encourage her future students to do their very best.

Note to Rotarians: If Gianna, Ella and Jack look familiar to you, it may be because they have been involved with the RWR over many years, passing out ribbons, working the registration desk, and supporting the Dance Factory Team.





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