

A Brief History of the Quality Student Program

Quality Students of the Tonawandas began in 1966 when a group of businessmen in the Tonawandas met to discuss how they might call attention to the high quality of the young men and women who attended and graduated from Tonawanda, North Tonawanda and Bishop Gibbons high schools and who someday would assume positions of trust and responsibility in our communities.

Thus was founded the unique Quality Student program, which has melded business and education in a program which honors these young men and women. The program, once solely sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas, has evolved over the years so that now it is arranged with the assistance of the Exchange and Kiwanis clubs of the Tonawandas.

In 1971, when Bishop Gibbons closed, many students from the Twin Cities continued their education at its sister school, Cardinal O'Hara High School, which then became the third high school in the program.

The 45 students are selected by teachers and a selection committee at each school. The honored students represent eight percent of their class who reside in either North Tonawanda or the City of Tonawanda, allowing North Tonawanda 25 students, Tonawanda 15 and Cardinal O'Hara 5.

Aims

- To inform young people of the importance that leadership, scholarship, service and character have, not only in school, but for later life as well.
- To meld business and industry with education by encouraging area businesses to sponsor a student and his or her parents.
- In the past, this prestigious event has included a dinner, a key part of the evening, at which the students and their parents are recognized. The evening's program includes an outstanding speaker, one who encourages the honorees to continue their education and eventually to give back to the community. In addition, a former Quality Student is chosen to highlight his or her achievements.
- The committee hopes that this program will serve as a memento for students chosen to be honored as Quality Students 2022.

City, School Board Officials

North Tonawanda
Austin Tylec, Mayor

Common Council
Robert Pecoraro, President
Frank DiBernardo
Joseph Lavey
Joseph Loncar
Robert Schmigel

Board of Education
Matthew Kennedy, President
Gregory J. Woytila,
Superintendent

Cardinal O'Hara
Board of Trustees
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Carl Nocera
Sean Rautenstrauch

Board of Education
Heather Sternin, President
Timothy A. Oldenburg, Ed.D.,
Superintendent

Program

Welcome

Mark Saltarelli, Chairman of the Quality Student Committee

Invocation

Rick Oates

Remarks by Former Quality Student



Tim Adowski was valedictorian of his 2010 graduating class at Cardinal O'Hara High School, having been named Quality Student that same year. He was born and raised in North Tonawanda and graduated in 2014 from the University at Buffalo with two bachelor degrees, one in aerospace engineering and the second in computer science.

Adowski continued his studies at UB and in 2017 received his master's degree in aerospace engineering followed two years later with a PhD, also in aerospace engineering, focusing on finite element modeling and Bayesian analysis.

In 2019, Adowski started working at Moog-ISP as a development engineer in rocket propulsion systems. He is responsible for design, building and testing of rocket engines.

Outside of work, he earned his 5th degree black belt in TaeKwon-Do in 2017 and currently is an instructor at Prescott's Martial Arts Academy.

Presentation of Awards

Mary Holzerland, Principal
Cardinal O'Hara High School

Michael Brown, Principal
Tonawanda Senior High School

Dinner

Presentation of Awards

Kristopher Clester, Assistant Principal
North Tonawanda Senior High School

Guest Speaker



Clint Winters was born and raised in the City of Tonawanda, graduating from Tonawanda High School in 1998. He continued his studies at Canisius College and graduated in 2002 with a degree in political science and criminal justice.

Winters has been employed and held various positions within the United States Department of Justice for more than 20 years, having served in duty stations in New York and California.

Currently, Winters is an FBI Supervisory Special Agent and in charge of the FBI Buffalo Safe Streets Task Force and violent crime programs in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Jamestown and Rochester.

Winters is married and the couple have three children.

Benediction

Rick Oates

Tonawanda Senior High School



Kreighton Butts

Kreighton Butts, son of Shea and Christopher Butts.

Activities: Christmas for Kids, church community events, People 2 People American Student Ambassador, THS Junior Police Academy, varsity wrestling, martial arts, helping neighbors with yard work.

Honors: High Honor Roll, National Honor Society, varsity letter for wrestling, multiple medals for grappling, blue belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, yellow belt in Judo, college Spanish credits.

Future Plans: Attend the University of Central Florida for physical therapy or chiropractics, continue competing in grappling and mixed martial arts.



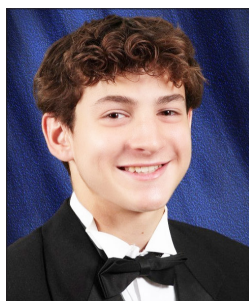
Caitlin Folga

Caitlin Folga, daughter of Ronald and Lisa Folga.

Activities: JV/Varsity volleyball, varsity track, Student Council, Christmas for Kids.

Honors: Most Improved Volleyball, Coaches Award, Girls State Representative, Reilly Scholar Award, Honor Roll, Scholar Athlete.

Future Plans: Attend college for fashion merchandising/marketing, reside in New York City.



Jonathan Goeddert

Jonathan Goeddert, son of Jeff and Jess Goeddert.

Activities: JV/Varsity Soccer, varsity track, NHS, Christmas for Kids, THS Bible Club, Ken-Ton U19 travel soccer team, Kenmore Alliance Church Impact Team, Dominican Republic Missions Team, Chicago Missions Team.

Honors: Technical and business department awards, High Honor Roll, varsity soccer captain, soccer awards for MVP for defense, Withstanding Warrior, Attitude-Character Effort award; Pride of NY scholarship, Rising-Star track award, Section IV and Division Soccer champions, Scholar Athlete.

Future Plans: Attend University at Buffalo for a 5-year Masters program in structural or civil engineering.



Destiny Hoerbelt

Destiny Hoerbelt, daughter of Kathryn Kolesar.

Activities: NHS treasurer, JV/Varsity volleyball, Mentor Club, various volunteer programs including: Donate Life drives, Canal Clean Sweep, The Magdalene Project.

Honors: St. Michael's College Book Award for Academic Achievement and Social Conscience, Team Warrior, High Honor Roll all marking periods, Well-Rounded Award, Warrior Way recipient.

Future Plans: Attend Niagara County Community College in the fall, obtain a bachelor degree in finance.



Aaron Kasprzak

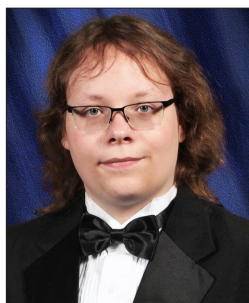
Aaron Kasprzak, son of Aaron and Naomi Kasprzak.

Activities: Soccer, swim, track, lifeguard, camp counselor, volunteer at church.

Honors: Honor Roll recipient 4 years, soccer division and sectional champions, placed 4th for track ECIC in the 400 free relay.

Future Plans: Attend Houghton College to study youth psychology.

Tonawanda Senior High School



Emmett Leader

Emmett Leader, son of Eric and Melissa Leader.

Activities: Golf Team, French Horn, THS play, Boy Scouts of America, NHS.

Honors: Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award, Buffalo State Honor Band 2020, Scholar Athlete, Eagle Scout candidate, Varsity Letter, accepted into UB Honors College

Future Plans: Attend college to receive a Masters Degree in engineering, work with NASA through research or become a NASA engineer.



Jackson Leski

Jackson Leski, son of Carolyn Leski.

Activities: Varsity golf, volunteer in Warrior Wear Closet, Make-A-Wish.

Honors: Warrior Way Award, Scholar Athlete, MVP for golf.

Future Plans: Attend college to become a math teach



Emma Ljiljanich

Emma Ljiljanich, daughter of Dave and Monica Ljiljanich.

Activities: NHS, Senior Class vice president, Varsity soccer captain and track, WNY Flash Soccer Academy, ECNL-RL, TSC volunteer coach, Christmas for Kids, Empire Girls State delegate, FBLA, Youth Court, downhill skiing, swimming, works at Prescott's Provisions.

Honors: Business Honor Society, ECIC first team, Homecoming Court, MVP offensive soccer, girls track MVP, Independent Health Wellness all-star, business and science department awards, WNY senior soccer All-Star game selectee

Future Plans: Attend Alfred University and play collegiate soccer, major in biology or or health sciences, attend medical school.



Christa Oates

Christa Oates, daughter of Richard and Rhoda Oates.

Activities: Varsity soccer, track, cross country, Young Life Ministry, Student Leadership and Council

Honors: Honor Roll, Girls State, track Rookie of the Year, Scholar Athlete, English Department award, Warrior Award.

Future Plans: Attend NCCC with an undecided major.



Abigail Opalinski

Abigail Opalinski, daughter of Brian and Danielle Opalinski.

Activities: President NHS, Youth Court judge, Peer-to-Peer program, varsity soccer captain, School-Planning team.

Honors: Hugh O'Brien leadership award, American Legion Auxiliary Empire Girls State, High Honor Roll, Warrior Way Spotlight, Attitude, Character and Effort award, defensive MVP award for soccer, geometry and APUSH department awards.

Future Plans: Attend UB and study biological sciences, to continue in genetic engineering.

Tonawanda Senior High School



Ryleigh Rapp

Ryleigh Rapp, daughter of Becky Woods.

Activities: Theater, GSA, Student Council, Chorale/Chorus, Peer to Peer.

Honors: High Honor Roll, Math department award, Warrior Way, accepted into 2020 ALA Girl's State

Future Plans: Attend College to study environmental science and horticulture.



Connor Scarpena

Connor Scarpena, son of Mark and Kathleen Scarpena.

Activities: NHS, Honor Roll, captain of X-Country team, junior varsity soccer, theater stage crew, varsity track and cross country, bass guitar, WNY Rabbit Society volunteer .

Honors: 2019 Tech Wars second place, 2021 Xerox Innovation 7 Information Tech award, 2021 coaches award for cross country.

Future Plans: Attend UB for biomedical engineering.



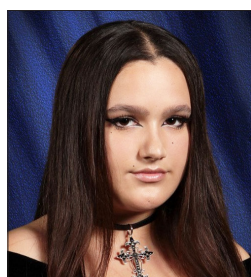
Kayla Tonaus

Kayla Tonaus, daughter of Mike and Jamie Tonaus.

Activities: Swim team, diving, girls swim team captain, lifeguard, swim volunteer, Leadership class.

Honors: Coaches award for swimming, Captain's award, highest grade for 11th grade English, Scholar Athlete.

Future Plans: Attend ECC for dental hygiene program, swim and dive for ECC.



Mia Turton

Mia Turton, daughter of Lance and Cindy Turton.

Activities: NHS, Student Council, Gender-Sexuality Alliance, class offices, Yearbook Club.

Honors: Science and Social Studies department awards, High Honor Roll, Warrior Way.

Future Plans: Take a "gap year" and save for college, then attend a university in California or Texas.



Kelsey Whipple

Kelsey Whipple, daughter of Kurt and Katherine Whipple.

Activities: Theater stage and cast, Youth Court, Gay-Straight Alliance, Student Council, class treasurer, Christmas for Kids, Peer-to-Peer, unified basketball program.

Honors: Honor Roll, art and math department awards, Certificate of Completion from the American Red Cross "responding to emergencies."

Future Plans: Receive a tattoo apprenticeship to become a tattoo artist, take classes at NCCC.

THE QUALITY STUDENT SPONSORS

Businesses, organizations and individuals join in sponsoring the Quality Student Scholars program.

The committee thanks the sponsors for their interest in and commitment to the program as well as the future of our communities and their young people.

- American Legion Post 264
- Thomas Balazs DDS LLP
- BFC Print Network
- Cardinal O'Hara Home School Association
- James Carey- Edward Jones
- Joseph J. Cassata, Esq.
- Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas
- Exchange Club of the Tonawandas
- Erie County Legislator John Bargnesi Jr.
- Excelsior Orthopedics
- James Hoddick DDS
- Kiwanis Club of the Tonawandas
- Knights of Columbus Madonna Council 2535
- David & Monica Ljiljanich
- M&R Lawn & Landscaping
- Mark and Joan Mullin
- New York State Senator Robert Ort
- North Tonawanda Firefighters Local 1333
- North Tonawanda Public Library
- North Tonawanda School District Board of Education
- North Tonawanda Teachers Association
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- Cathleen & Thomas Picciano
- Dale Rogers
- Honorable Mark Saltarelli
- Squire's Tap Room
- State Senator Robert Ort
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- Tonawanda Department of Public Works
- Tonawanda Education Association
- Tonawanda Firefighters Local 859
- Tonawanda Mayor John White
- Tonawanda Police Chief William Strassburg
- Robert Warner, DDS
- Willard & Associates

Quality Student Committee

The Quality Student committee meets
at Tonawanda City Hall to plan the annual event.

Committee Members:

Mark E. Saltarelli, Chairman

Joseph Armenia
Michael Brown
John Crainer
James Fisher
Kelly Harszlak

James Hoddick, DDS
Rena Hoffman
Mary Holzerland
Sarah Nelson
Nicole Ritter
Barbara Tucker