Twentieth Annual Awards Night

As people poured into the Performing Arts Center for the Twentieth Annual Awards Night by the Chelmsford High School Alumni Association, the excitement in the air was palpable. A vast array of students, teachers, and parents joined to form an audience of all walks of life. Despite any differences they had, the common factor linking them all was an overwhelming support and love for the CHS Class of 2018.

As the crowd conversed before the ceremony, one could easily see the spark of anticipation, excitement, and gratitude amongst the recipients. The CHS seniors chatted easily, with conversation filled with their future plans, their awards, and even their enthusiastic nerves to be on a stage in front of an audience. Parents and teachers smiled brightly, with pride in the wonderful students the Class of 2018 had become which they had helped to shape. On stage, as the CHSAA prepared, their generosity, kindness, and pride could be found in big smiles and the beaming stack of red folders filled with potential and opportunity for the Class of 2018.

As the auditorium lights dimmed, quieting the steady chatter of the audience, a distinct sense of anticipation hung heavy above the scholarship recipients. One by one their names were called, and an astounding number of 160 seniors received awards! Over 154 awards were presented throughout the ceremony, celebrating the seniors’ athleticism, perseverance, intelligence, curiosity, and character. The CHS awards night has come a long way since its debut in 1993 when only two awards were presented, totalling an underwhelming $253 in scholarships. Today, a resounding total of $800,000 has been accorded to high achieving seniors in the last 25 years.

The CHSAA is a volunteer association made of of two committees: the Scholarships Committee and the Awards Night Committee. These councils have donated an immeasurable $55,000 to the CHS Awards Night. In accordance to the eloquent words spoken by Mr. Simonian, the Chelmsford High School Alumni Association has “made a living with what we got and made a life with what they gave”. This association has touched the lives of many by opening doors that only money could provide. These scholarships have given students the opportunity to broaden their horizons by alleviating some of the stress that money may cause. The Scholarships Committee requests every donor and CHS graduating class to grant at least $500 to support the senior recipients.

The CHSAA claims to support all students regardless of background and need. They have done a commendable job matching students from all walks of life with appropriate scholarships. Students have received scholarships ranging from their excellence in accademia, community service, and their moral standing to their laudatory performance in athletics, art, and even music. President of the CHSAA, Mr. McSheely, claims that his only regret is that “five scholarships didn’t get presented because students didn’t apply for them”. He encourages every student to apply for the scholarships because they might surprise themselves by being the recipient of at least one. Mr. Simonian, another higher-up in the CHSAA, stated that he is glad that they have “managed to keep the event quick and moving along”, but always aspires to give out more scholarships in the following year.

In the joyous words of Anna Shi, scholarship recipient and future engineering major at WPI, “any scholarship is better than no scholarship”. Gratitude radiated off Anna and her eyes glimmered as she thanked the CHSAA for their financial support. Their pride, gratitude, and exhilaration shone through their beaming faces in the pictures they took to commemorate their night in the spotlight. These seniors are very grateful for the support that the CHSAA has given them and hope to do the same for prospective seniors in the years to come.

As the joyous night drew to a close, the anticipation and excitement previously felt by the students lingered among them. Every CHS senior in the crowd had been waiting for these moments for their entire school career. Before them, their plans for senior barbecue, prom, and graduation pushed them along their path to their future. Each student had persevered to get to these moments of pride, happiness, and relief. Now that they had, all that could be felt was their lingering anticipation to start their lives, whether they were taking a gap year to travel or jumping into a bachelors program.

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Jessica Hagg, award recipient, describes her reaction to receiving an award. “When I received my award, I was both shocked and honored. It was nice learning about the family for whom my scholarship was named after and I am proud to keep their memory alive,” she said appreciatively. Jessica is attending Rivier University, with a major in education and community leadership.

Excited to start her studies in biology, Fanny Riand said “I am incredibly grateful to have received three scholarships from the CHSAA. Not only are they helping make my dreams possible, they are showing that they believe in my potential, and that truly means a lot.”

Future Worcester Polytechnic Institute Biomedical Engineering student, Lindsay Ambrosino, said “to know that I was chosen for the awards dedicated to such amazing people in the Chelmsford community meant so much to me, and will really help in paying for college.” She also greatly appreciated the awards night as a whole, saying that “it was run very well and overall a great celebration of senior achievements and alumni giving back.”