

NFIB helps groom business leaders of tomorrow

Nine students win scholarships for entrepreneurship

| By Gazette Staff



The National Federation of Independent Business Young Entrepreneur Foundation, with an eye to fostering future business leaders, has honored nine Maryland high school students as recipients of the sixth annual NFIB Young Entrepreneur Awards, a scholarship program designed to reward and encourage entrepreneurial talents among high school students.

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The award recipients receive from \$1,000 to \$10,000 in tuition assistance from the foundation to attend the university, college, community college or vocational-technical institute of their choice. The awards program, which encourages students to consider a career in small business, debuted in 2003 when it awarded a total of 110 scholarships nationwide.

This year more than 400 \$1,000-\$2,000 scholarships will be awarded, thanks to the financial support from numerous small business leaders, corporate and foundation supporters. The foundation is associated with the NFIB, the small business advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C., with an office in Annapolis. This year's major corporate sponsors are Visa and The McKelvey Foundation, a New York City organization founded by entrepreneur Andy McKelvey, best known for turning a Yellow Pages marketing business into monster.com, the job search engine.

To earn a scholarship, students were required to write an essay describing their entrepreneurial endeavors and goals. Standardized test scores, grade point average and class rank were also considered.

In the individual awards, Jason Patrick of Wheaton, a Northwood High School senior, won the NFIB/Sam's Club Young Entrepreneur Award. Yijun Liu of North Potomac, a Richard Montgomery High senior, won the NFIB/Maryland Leadership Council Young Entrepreneur Award.

Other awards winners were Leonardtown High senior Blaire Brown of Leonardtown; Academy of the Holy Cross senior Mary Margaret Flynn of Silver Spring; Charles Herbert Flowers High senior Marcus Colbert of Upper Marlboro; North Caroline High senior Gretchen Heberling of Greensboro; Atholton High senior Elizabeth Sullivan of Clarksville; Cedar Brook Academy senior Aimee Welch of Bowie; and Marriotts Ridge High senior Brendan Wray of Ellicott City.

"We are overjoyed by the tremendous amount of interest in our scholarship program," Don V. Cogman, the foundation's board chairman, said in a statement. "This year more than 8,000 students applied to receive a NFIB YEF Award, demonstrating that today's youth embody the entrepreneurial spirit and seek a place in tomorrow's free enterprise system.

"NFIB congratulates this year's winners for their tremendous accomplishments and hopes the scholarships will assist these young entrepreneurs as they continue on their paths towards successful futures."

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