

# 2023 Mason FOREVER Foundation scholarship winners announced

The Mason FOREVER Foundation has announced its scholarship winners for 2023:

•\$4,000 for Lewiston resident Natalie Sharer, a graduate from Lewiston-Porter who will major in biomedical sciences and play lacrosse at Roberts Wesleyan College this fall. She played lacrosse and soccer throughout her high school years and was an active volunteer while in Key Club.

•\$4,000 for Youngstown resident David Pavan, a graduate of Lewiston-Porter High School, who will major in business and sports management at St. Bonaventure University. He played soccer and baseball throughout his high school years, and participated in the Mighty Niagara Half Marathon and Hospice Dash for several years. Pavan was awarded the Mason FOREVER Foundation – Niagara Pioneer Scholarship.

•Other awardees included, Megan Heath of Waverly, a psychology major at SUNY Oneonta; Willow Burt of Borad Brook, Connecticut, a nursing major at University of Massachusetts Amherst; Courtney Grace Truth of Coventry, Rhode Island, a physician's assistant major at Springfield College (Massachusetts); Laila Heiss of Alma, Michigan, a sports



Pictured: Scholarship recipient David Pavan with Mason FOREVER Foundation Treasurer Collin Monteone and scholarship recipient Natalie Sharer. (Submitted photo)

science major with the intent on becoming a sports medicine physician at Northern Michigan University; Amanda Raymond of Auburn, Maine, a speech-language pathology major at Elms College (Maine); and Diane

Barazarte Vielma of Weston, Florida, a biology with the intent on becoming a dentist major at Nova Southeastern University (Florida).

The Mason FOREVER Foundation scholarships are presented in honor of Mason Sawyer Monteone, who was a third-year interdisciplinary medical sciences major at Florida State University in Tallahassee when he tragically died in a car accident at the age of 21. Monteone was interested in becoming a physician assistant or orthopedic surgeon. He graduated from Canisius High School in Buffalo and attended middle school at Lewiston-Porter.

Scholarships are awarded each Aug. 16 to students who are enrolled in an accredited university/college in the U.S. and are pursuing a degree in the medical, health or fitness/sports fields.

Presently, the Mason FOREVER Foundation (via GOT SNEAKERS) is collecting used or new sneakers and cleats. Its major fundraising event is an annual 5K in early June.

Visit [www.masonforever.com](http://www.masonforever.com) to donate or to learn more.

## IN THE NEWS



### New leadership for local congregation

The Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, Holy Name Province, located at Stella Niagara, wrapped up the month of August with the installation ceremony of its new leadership council. Elected to a four-year term are Sister Jo-Anne Grabowski, provincial minister, along with Sister Nancy Zelma, first councilor; Sisters Regina Snyder and Teresa Miklitsch, provincial councilors.

The council embarks on its four-year term with the following statement: "Imbued with hope, we recommit ourselves to our Franciscan values of deepening relationships, continuing to engage in diverse service and generously using our resources for the common good of our community and the world. Trusting in God's providence, open to risk we walk together."

The sponsored institutions of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity are the Center of Renewal Retreat and Conference Center; Stella Niagara Education Park; Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart; and Francis Center Children's and Women's Respite Program, Niagara Falls.

The Stella Niagara Franciscan sisters continue to minister in various capacities in Florida, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, West Virginia, Mexico and Tanzania, as well as caring for the infirm and elderly sisters of Holy Name Province.

The Sisters of St. Francis have served in the U.S. since 1874 and

have been headquartered at Stella Niagara since 1908.

Pictured: Sisters Snyder, Grabowski, Zelma and Miklitsch. (Submitted)

### County committee to plan 250th celebration

Niagara County is in the process forming a committee to plan for celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States on July 4, 2026, according to Legislature Chairman Becky Wydysz. Robert Emerson, executive director of Old Fort Niagara, has been asked to chair the committee.

"Bob Emerson approached the legislature about forming a local America 250 committee so we can coordinate events across the county to celebrate this tremendous milestone; but to do so, we need ample time to prepare," Wydysz said. "The legislature is fully behind the effort and very pleased that Bob has agreed to chair the committee. We hope to begin making appointments in the coming weeks and have the first organizational meeting within the next month or so."

Anyone wishing to volunteer on the American 250 committee should send an email to the County Legislature via the public information office at [ncpio@niagaracounty.com](mailto:ncpio@niagaracounty.com).

"Old Fort Niagara played a role in the American Revolution, and we want to be able to recognize that history as part of a larger celebration of the United States' 250th birthday," Emerson said. "We want to bring all corners of Niagara County together and make the 4th of July in 2026 something special and memorable."

### NU discussion on mass shootings

National expert Dr. Jaclyn Schilckraut will share promising ways shareholders can take an active role in helping to prevent mass shootings in their communities on Friday, Sept. 22, at 10 a.m. in the Russell Salvatore Dining Commons on the Niagara University campus. The presentation, "Are Mass Shootings Preventable? Lessons Learned from Previous Tragedies," is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Dr. Dana Radatz, associate professor of criminology and criminal justice, at [dradatz@niagara.edu](mailto:dradatz@niagara.edu).



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