

Scholars awarded dollars

A record amount given to South Colonie grads

COLONIE — South Colonie Dollars for Scholars awarded 60 scholarships totaling \$37,458 to Colonie Central High School graduating seniors at the Annual Awards Night ceremony on May 16.

The Dollars for Scholars Chapter has awarded more than \$386,000 to support CCHS students' educational pursuits. The record 2019 total — breaking the 2017 record of \$32,450 — has dramatically increased from \$3,500 in 2003 thanks to continuous community support.

Fifteen donors contributed scholarship awards of \$1,000 or more in 2019. Twenty-six scholarships ranged from \$500 to \$900. Most of these sponsors have been consistent donors for five or more years.

Scholarships include a range of interests and activities, including scholarships for academic achievement in various subjects, participation in

community service endeavors, sports, music, the performing arts, the Colonie Youth Court, and the Pure Adapt Web Technologies Scholarship, which CCHS graduates sponsor.

For 2019, the average scholarship award was \$624. Among the many Dollars for Scholars scholarships awarded in 2019, friends and family members have donated money in the memory of former South Colonie School District staff, classmates, and teachers.

A first time scholarship example is the Anne Bernice Bynter Memorial Scholarship sponsored by her daughter and family.

"We wanted to honor our mother. She would have wanted to help someone pursue a nursing career," said Karen Bynter Weir. "We were very impressed with how dedicated all the Chapter volunteers are — so happy we did this."

Of note for 2019 is the

\$5,000 (Friends of) Sheila Allen Memorial Fund Scholarship awarded to a female who will attend college and who demonstrated community involvement, financial need, or demographic or social need. The 2019 recipient is Viviana Murphy. As part of the scholarship criteria, she wrote an essay explaining her adoption in China and how her Colonie mother explained the 1970 abduction and murder of 17-year-old Sheila Allen. At the Awards Night, Viviana met the family of Sheila Allen.

From the Chapter's initial scholarship program in 2003, Carmen Barber was one of the three seniors to earn a scholarship that year.

"Thanks in part to that funding, I earned a dual degree in political science and communications from Syracuse University," he said. "The knowledge, skills, and experience served me well in the professional world and would eventually help me gain admittance to Albany Law

School and a successful career in New York state government. None of this would have been possible without the Dollars for Scholars program. The financial support of these scholarships affords young people the resources needed to achieve their dreams."

"With the continued support of the South Colonie community, our local Dollars for Scholars Chapter wants to expand the number of scholarships awarded and increase the overall scholarship level in future years," said Theresa Capobianco, chapter president. "A donation to our community scholarship program is a commitment to the future for the students of today. We want to support their postsecondary success."

"Because college doesn't happen by chance" is a guiding principle for Dollars for Scholars chapters nationwide and a reason why community donor support is so essential. While \$250 is the minimum amount to have a named scholarship for the local Dollars for Scholars chapter,

they encourage small donations. Any donation is considered as a taxable itemized deduction.

Community members, including businesses, can contact the chapter to discuss funding opportunities to recognize their local business or interests. For information about the scholarship program for CCHS students, visit the chapter's website at southcoloniedollarsforscholars.org or its Facebook page. Online donations can be made through the Chapter's web site.

The local chapter's corporate parent, Scholarship America, began as the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America and was founded in 1958 by Dr. Irving A. Fradkin in Fall River, Massachusetts.

In 1961, it became an incorporated national organization. Fradkin published an autobiography in 2002, in which he wrote that the "purpose and dream" of his organization

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Dollars for Scholars

"is to motivate and inspire our future leaders to give something of themselves back to their communities and their country, so that they can better understand and appreciate the dream of democracy

and perpetuate our priceless freedom ... to bring about a better, more peaceful and more productive America."

CSFA awarded its first \$500 in scholarships in 1961. Since then, the national organization has awarded more than \$4.2 billion to more than 2.5 million students making it the nation's largest nonprofit, private sector scholarship and educational support organization.