

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars Recognition Ceremony

*The Vermont Presidential Scholars Program recognizes graduating high school seniors who show outstanding scholarship, leadership, and service to their communities. This year six scholars have been chosen in the general category, five scholars in the Career Technical Education category, and three scholars in the Arts. There were also several students receiving honorable mention, three in the Career Technical Education category and one in the Arts category. These eighteen students were chosen among a pool of nominees for this recognition, submitted by their school communities, and ultimately chosen as recipients by a selection committee.*

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars Recognition Ceremony



# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: the Arts





# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: the Arts



Matthew showed an obvious commitment to the arts. The review committee noted his strong love of the English language and the use of strong visuals in his writing. They were “Wowed” by his humble talent in showcasing other young writers. He attends Craftsbury Academy and has spent a great deal of time at the Dorset Theatre. Mathew was described by his teacher to have an intense drive to create that has never been seen before in a student of his age.

**Matthew Califano, Craftsbury Academy**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: the Arts



Hayden took the pandemic as an opportunity to pursue his art education. His teacher noted his willingness to self-teach and self-motivation in hours of online tutorials and a willingness to experiment. The review committee was “wowed” by his technical skills in both colored pencils and digital media. They enjoyed that he used his community as a place to explore and create, using his art to make it a better place. Hayden attends Mount Mansfield Union Highschool and Burlington Technical Center.

**Hayden Jessiman, Mount Mansfield UHS**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: the Arts



Anthony was acknowledged for mastery of the trumpet and his involvement with all the instrumental ensembles at Essex High School where he attends. He was described as constantly striving to create new music and showing above-and-beyond involvement in the arts. The review committee was “wowed” by his mastery of the trumpet through great technical ability, tone, and well-produced pieces overall. One member of the review committee had this to say: “He is going places and I want to see where he goes.”

**Anthony Rizvanov, Essex HS**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: the Arts



Alexander was recognized for a long history of telling stories, a love for science, good humor, and working with young kids. He attends Craftsbury Academy and has worked with Dorset Theatre Festival's Playwright-in-Residence. He strives to create new work regularly and "Wowed" the review committee with his messages of hope and humor in his writing.

**Honorable Mention: Alexander Califano, Craftsbury Academy**



# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career and Technical Education





# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Emma served in leadership roles in the state SkillsUSA during both 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years where she brought people together virtually and in person, is a team leader on this year's Greenway Challenge, where her team is designing a solar powered composting bin that can be set-up and used at public transfer stations. In her sophomore and junior years in the Advanced Manufacturing Program Emma earned 18 college credits as well as becoming a Certified Manufacturing Associate, a nationally recognized post-secondary credential.

**Emma Dana, River Valley Technical Center (Springfield HS)**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Evan did two placements at UVM Medical center and this year is interning in two different dental offices, earning the Dental Radiology certification, will sit for the national Dental Assisting certification exam, was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society and will graduate with 31 college credits. As he wrote in his college application, “Everyone deserves to feel like their smile radiates beauty. If I could restore beauty in a person’s smile each day, this would have a profound effect on my sense of purpose and the beauty in my community. Dental hygiene will allow me to do what I do best, restore beauty and character to the world.”

**Evan Hodgson**, Center for Technology, Essex (Essex HS)

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Jaden moved to Vermont mid-way through her junior year, and was able to successfully complete a year of the Welding program earning a nationally recognized post-secondary certification in welding - the D1.1 Unlimited Structural Steel Welding Certification, She is scheduled to do a work-based learning experience with a machinist this year, pursues an academic course load including AP and Honors classes in Psychology and Biology, serves as the SkillsUSA chapter president and spearheads outreach with the Student Voice group including advocating for access non-traditional students access to CTE.

**Jaden Marie-Schott Gallup, North Country Career Center (North Country UHS)**



# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Haley placed 1st at the Vermont State SkillsUSA competition, placed 7th in the national championships, carries a rigorous workload earning a 4.0 GPA in HVAC and academic classes, has obtained the universal EPA 608 certification and is working toward NORA Bronze Oil Heat certification. She is also a member of the National Technical Honor Society and has been accepted to the University of Northern Ohio in a 2-year technical education HVAC program. She has a serious interest in becoming an engineer where she can turn her talents toward designing the HVAC equipment of the future.

**Haley Michaud, Green Mountain Technology and Career Center (Hazen UHS)**



# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Damien served as the lead teacher on a programming summer camp, is working as a Black River Innovation Campus Minecraft Instructor, earned Adobe Professional Certification and CIW Web Development Associate and is working towards the CompTIA A+ certification. He will be co-opping at Simon Pearce Glassware, plans to develop his own web design business, is a National Technical Honor Society Student and serves as an ambassador at the CTE center. As his nominator wrote, “Damian has the technical, interpersonal, and employability skills needed to change the world.”

**Damian Stagner, River Valley Technical Center (Springfield HS)**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Declan did computer programming for a CNC wood router for a local start-up and started his own firewood processing business. He is working to help build affordable housing for low-income people by designing and building a Tiny House on Wheels partnering with Homes First VT. He was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society with distinction and will pursue the building trades. Planning to attend a Vermont college to continue and deepen his knowledge in Construction Management, he hopes to use his skills to make our community a better place through building partnerships and houses. As his nominator writes, “There are no limits to the way Declan will impact our community for the better.”

**Honorable Mention: Declan Anderson, Hannaford Career Center (Middlebury UHS)**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Hanna earned her National EMT certification during her first year at CVCC and is working this year to earn her Paramedic I certification, enrolled in 12 college credits last semester and will be enrolled in 12 college credits this semester, participated in HOSA and was part of the HOSA leadership conference. Hanna works to raise awareness of CTE as an option for all students. She is a driven and skilled student and professional and gives back to her community. Her nominator explains, “Hanna attends each class with enthusiasm and comes back the next day to CVCC excited to share what she has learned and done during her VTC courses.”

**Honorable Mention: Hanna Grasso, Central Vermont Career Center (Montpelier HS)**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: Career Technical Education



Winter was awarded the UVM Citizen Scholar award, has a leadership role in the Twin Valley Pride Youth Group, won awards at the Vermont FBLA conference in the area of Organizational Leadership, and has been both a reporter and now is Secretary/Historian for the local chapter of FBLA where she helped organize her school's involvement in Project Feed the 1000s. Winter takes on a rigorous course load in addition to her three dual enrollment courses, runs her own successful jewelry business, and creates beautifully designed pieces of jewelry. She is a member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society. Winter also works with the Center's Filmmaking and Digital Editing program to create public service announcements to recruit future CTE students.

**Honorable Mention: Winter Nakos, Windham Regional Career Center (Twin Valley HS)**



# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: General



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Andrew attends Burr and Burton Academy and has worked closely with the school's technology department to create the school's first ever unified eSports team, has constructed a super-computer to mine cryptocurrencies and has educated other students to carry on this project after they have graduated. He believes that in order to solve the problems that have often polarized our world today, we must put ourselves in situations that allow us to view issues from varying perspectives in order to keep an open mind and move toward resolution.

**Andrew Claire, Burr and Burton Academy**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: General



Anna attends Peoples Academy and is a founding member of the school's Gender and Sexuality Club, Equity, the Justice and Inclusion Club, and has co-facilitated a class exploring historical and current events regarding social justice and equity. They see housing insecurity as a problem that needs to be addressed in our state and through utilizing existing housing infrastructure not currently being used, could be repurposed to provide a safe place for the unhoused to sleep.

Anna Isselhardt, Peoples Academy

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: General



Emelia attends Burr and Burton Academy and in their role as a new student mentor plans activities and events to help students settle into high school, offering advice on academics and extracurricular activities through an advisory group that meets twice weekly. Emilia wants to see that issues regarding mental health are covered in school curriculum as equally as physical health, believing that increased knowledge and awareness will help remove the negative stigmatization often associated with these afflictions that can affect any one of us in many ways.

**Emilia de Jounge, Burr and Burton Academy**



# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: General



Madeline attends Richford High School, has been a legislative page at the Vermont State House, and is president of their local chapter of the National Honor Society, where they have personally spearheaded a school supply drive to ensure that all children in the community had access to the necessary tools for their learning. They also see playing sports as a great way for youth to make friends, stay healthy, and succeed academically, however, many free or affordable opportunities to play on a youth sports team do not exist due to lack of volunteers and propose that high school athletes volunteer and coach these teams to help solve this problem while also providing them with community service hours.

**Madeline Pike, Richford HS**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: General



John attends Richford High School, is a member of the Vermont Youth Council and the school's National Honor Society, engaging in activities such as editing and maintaining the school's website and obtaining grant funding to improve the community which provided a public ice rink, community fun-run, movie night, and more. John has a strong interest in local and state government and how to leverage funding to improve community facilities, a current passion is to bring a track to their area so that local track and field athletes do not have to travel up to an hour to the nearest facility.

**John Viens, Richford HS**

# 2023 Vermont Presidential Scholars: General



Tovahn attends Rivendell Academy, is the student representative on the school board, volunteers extensively for the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and was accepted into a semester program at the Mountain School where they were involved in restructuring that school's library to ensure that its books were culturally appropriate and promoted equality. Tovahn is intrigued with linguistics and how language has played a role in dividing modern society and seek to gain an understanding of the key uses of language that have added to this situation and take steps to remove them to improve this generation's future.

**Tovahn Vitols, Rivendell Academy**



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# For More Information

For more information about the [Vermont Presidential Scholars](#) program please visit the Vermont Agency of Education web site or contact Sigrid Olson at [sigrid.olson@vermont.gov](mailto:sigrid.olson@vermont.gov).

For more information about the [US Department of Education's Presidential Scholars](#) program please visit the US Department of Education's web site or contact Simone Olson at [simone.olson@ed.gov](mailto:simone.olson@ed.gov).