



2017

# Rising Stars

**Meet some  
Cape and Islands  
high school seniors  
who will make you  
feel good about  
the future**



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**On the cover:** Barnstable senior **Caroline Neville** is giving back to the community. People helped her family when they were in need, and she wants to do the same.  
[RON SCHLOERB]

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## Dear readers,

Everyone who works on the Rising Stars project knows that it's so much bigger than the task at hand. There's a weight of responsibility that sets in when you realize that you're witnessing concrete evidence of intangible virtues that will make the world a better place — honor, respect, compassion, fortitude, kindness, patience, loyalty, humility, excellence, gratitude. ... The list goes on. It's not a task, it's a privilege. And everyone who contributes is grateful for the opportunity.

I wish we could include a profile of every Rising Stars nominee because they're all so amazing. I'm not just saying that. The judges will attest to it. We asked three respected community leaders to take on the toughest task of deciding which 20 kids would be featured in this year's Rising Stars. All three expressed how difficult, but rewarding, it was. And we're so very grateful to them:

The Rev. Kate Wilkinson is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House in Provincetown. She routinely demonstrates her passion for service and commitment to social justice.

Joseph Doolin is the president/CEO emeritus of Catholic Charities, serving Eastern Massachusetts. He also developed and ran community-based long-term care programs in Boston neighborhoods.

Mindy Todd is the managing director of editorial for WCAI, our local NPR station. She's the host and producer of "The Point," a program that digs deep into issues that matter to Cape Cod and the Islands.

They're all movers and shakers. They all shine a light out into the world. And they all have a discerning eye for the promise of young people who will do the same.

Speaking of discerning eyes, thank you to all of the folks who recognize the special qualities in these kids and who send in nomination letters. (You really know how to tug at a heart!)

Thank you to our photographers, who rally around this project and produce stunning portraits. And thank you to the writers, who care so deeply about their assigned kids and who have to make tough decisions about what to include and what goes unsaid because our Rising Stars' accomplishments just can't fit on one page.

I hope you'll get a good sense of who these young, promising citizens are, and you'll feel that the future is brighter than you thought.

Please enjoy.

Patti Bangert  
Special sections and PrimeTime Cape Cod editor, Cape Cod Times

BARNSTABLE HIGH SCHOOL

# Brendan W. Clark

By Patrick Flanary | Contributing writer

**W**e'd do well to nail the grammar here; after all, the co-editor of Barnstable High School's award-winning newspaper is reading. A perfectionist with a penchant for politics, Brendan W. Clark is just as concerned with covering public policy responsibly, and with a keen editor's eye.

"Understanding that relationship between the media, which gets the word out, and the government has just been crucial to me in understanding how those two spheres interact," he says.

Clark's packed LinkedIn profile reflects a dedicated community leader who runs on ambition.

Among his accomplishments are serving as chairman of the Youth Commission, an advisory board of the Barnstable Town Council.

There, Clark helped found the annual Community Substance Abuse Prevention Forum and 7th Grade Youth Summit, which prepares students for the inevitable exposure to illegal drugs in high school.

The Barnstable District Attorney's Office has helped Clark raise funds for the effort.

Clark says his passion for his hometown of Barnstable dates to working with former town manager Thomas Lynch, whom Clark still calls his mentor.

"He's been the one to bring me up in this system, and make me see its successes and its flaws," says Clark, who carved out an internship for himself with the town three summers ago.

Observing those successes and flaws have invigorated Clark to pursue a career in law and government.

Identifying as fiscally conservative and socially liberal, Clark says people often ask if he'll run for president.

Maybe one day, he tells them. But first, he plans to pursue a law degree and study public policy at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. Whether Clark decides to seek a high court nomination or run for office down the road, he says, "it will be somehow tied back to serving the community of the country."



**Brendan Clark has gotten a big head start on community service. He's spent a great deal of time volunteering at Barnstable Town Hall. [RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]**

"I've never seen anyone like him in my entire life," says Clark's grandfather William Stimmell, who nominated him as a Rising Star. "He's done everything in town that you can think of. I wish I was younger so I could see what he's going to end up doing in about 10 more years."

For the moment, until the day he leaves for college, Clark says he'll continue to make good on what he calls his "lifelong love affair with the town of Barnstable."

**“** Always listen to others, regardless of the hypocrisy and lunacy of their messages. Why? Because in the end, in order to refute and change an opinion, you must first be willing to see it from the other side.”



NAUSET REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

# Alexis Comeau



**Alexis Comeau teaches yoga at Power Yoga of Cape Cod in East Harwich. It's just one of the ways she will fund her adventurous gap year.** [MERRILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

By Adam Lucente | [alucente@capecodonline.com](mailto:alucente@capecodonline.com)

**A**lexis Comeau, of Harwich, is a senior at Nauset Regional High School, and also studies at Cape Cod Community College. The term “Rising Star” is perhaps an understatement for her.

As she nears graduation, Alexis has shown a dedication to bettering the world around her, and using her education and experiences to help others.

Alexis demonstrated a commitment to community service early in her youth, starting a group called the Cape Cod Mermaids, which organized beach cleanups when she was a preteen.

But it was Alexis’ diagnosis with an eating disorder her freshman year that propelled her into her current position as a mentor for younger students.

“It caused me to drop out of school,” Alexis says. “Since returning from that I’ve been teaching educational classes at the middle school for eighth-graders about mental health, and taking a different path and approach to life.”

The disorder was undoubtedly a hardship, but it showed

how Alexis can change the world around her, no matter the challenges. “I let them know that they have the freedom to create their own life and shouldn’t be restrained by any illness or anything like that.”

As she nears graduation, Alexis is busy maintaining a balance between school, work and service. She attends Nauset Regional High School every other day and the community college one or two nights per week.

On top of her studies, she teaches yoga at Power Yoga Cape Cod. “I always struggled with anxiety and sitting still; that’s what led me to yoga,” she says. She’s also a waitress at the Red Nun Bar & Grill.

Alexis is working to save enough to fund her planned gap year after graduation, when

she plans to teach English and work on sustainable farms in Guatemala, South Asia and beyond, learning about growing healthful foods and other cultures in the process. “I want real-world experience, hands-on learning,” she says. “That’s how I’ve always learned best.”

After a road trip across the continental U.S., Alexis plans to work on a sustainable and organic coffee plantation in Guatemala, and then teach English in Peru and either India or Sri Lanka.

She wants to end her gap year by volunteering with Willing Workers on organic farms in Australia.

“I have a new passion for sustainable living and living in ways that help our environment,” she says. “I hope to learn methods I can then take home to start my own garden or raise awareness (about) eating locally.”

She says she believes teaching English will help her future students, too. “A lot of people around the world struggle to get jobs because they’re not bilingual,” she says.

Alexis learned this in 2016, when she spent a week volunteering at an orphanage in Latvia, teaching the children basic English.

Until graduation, Alexis is preparing for her trip on top of her work and school commitments.

She recently purchased a van and is fitting it with solar panels so it may function as a solar-powered camper.

And come August, she will take her knowledge, passion and experiences on the road. “I realized while in treatment how lucky I was to have a family that supported me ... and access to healthy foods and things to fuel my body the right way,” she says. “I want to help people who don’t have those attain them.”

“It’s hard for me to sit in classes when I know I could be out in the world helping people, making a difference, and doing things that have an impact.”

## NAUSET REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

# Trudy Cox

By Mary Ann Bragg | [mbragg@capecodonline.com](mailto:mbragg@capecodonline.com)

**G**ertrude “Trudy” Cox, a Nauset Regional High School senior from Wellfleet, managed to get all the way to ninth grade school before she realized something: She needed to make adjustments in the way she was studying.

“I was frustrated with myself,” Trudy says of the good-but-not-great grades she was getting as a freshman.

In the past she’d always done her homework and gotten by easily. By the time she had finished up her freshman year of high school, though, she realized she needed to make a change if she wanted to do well in college.

“I learned how my brain worked,” Trudy says of her efforts to come up with better and more personalized methods of studying.

It made a big difference. By sophomore year, her grades improved, and she found that beyond her favorites of English and history she really liked the sciences — biology, for example — that she’d shunned before.

She started to join clubs: for example, STEMInist, which promotes women in science, technology, math and engineering. She joined the Key Club to do more volunteer service.

As a National Honor Society member, Trudy has been part of the planning for a program that helps eighth-graders better prepare for high school.

As it’s planned now, Nauset juniors and seniors will go to the two middle schools in the region and meet the eighth-graders — with parents and teachers present — for informal chats.

“Let them question us,” Trudy says of the



**Trudy Cox designed personalized methods of studying that greatly improved her school performance. She shares her methods with younger students. She’s also on the school crew team.** [MERRILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

eighth-graders.

For Nauset social sciences teacher Julie Kobold, Trudy was “a standout from the get-go,” starting with an AP psychology class as a junior.

“This year, she is doing an independent study with me, which I don’t often do,” Kobold says. “Seniors really struggle to keep themselves motivated, but she’s had absolutely no problem.”

Trudy’s “aha” moment as a freshman, when she figured out that she needed to improve her study methods, was notable, Kobold says.

Naturally gifted students sometimes have

trouble adjusting academically as they move through high school, she says.

“Trudy came to this realization on her own in ninth grade,” Kobold says, and now Trudy is helping younger students do the same.

Trudy plans to go to a four-year college, although she hasn’t decided which one yet, and then medical school. Then she wants to study to be a psychiatrist.

She has interned at the Gestalt International Study Center in Wellfleet and will work as a paid assistant this summer at the Cape Cod Institute, which hosts summer workshops at the high school for mental health and management professionals.

“My advice is not to take yourself too seriously, to say, ‘It’s OK to make mistakes,’ and have fun in life, that’s important.”



NAUSET REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

# Nicole Gordon

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**A**lthough friendly and forthright, Nicole Gordon is not without a touch of mystery.

How is it possible that she takes five AP classes and yet has not had to do homework in two years?

How did she adapt after being adopted from China, where she had been moved five times from different foster homes back to an orphanage

before her mother and father adopted her at 10 months?

To the first question, her guidance counselor has some answers: She doesn't have to work as hard as most people because she's that bright.

"Her brain is just wound that way," says Stephen Boskus, her guidance counselor

She's a one-time learner, meaning she gets the lesson the first time and then is able to apply it, he says.

It's rare for students to take five AP classes at once. And to do so while relaxed is almost unheard of, Boskus says.

And yet, Nicole can ace her classes, then practice jump rope with her highly competitive team, the Bayside Skippers, play varsity field hockey and help other students with calculus.

She has a 4.65 grade-point average, meaning she's had to get all As and A-pluses in the highest level courses since her freshman year.

She likes math so much that she spends a free period doing extra math problems with a friend for fun.

"Even our AP classes are kind of mundane for her," Boskus says.

Her role model is Stephen Hawking. She read his books "A Brief History of Time," "The Theory of Everything" and "The Grand Design."

Hawkins is a cosmologist, which Nicole explained means that he studies "the math of the universe ... Big Bang stuff," she says.

After a sophomore year astronomy class with Paul Davies, whom Nicole described as "very eccentric" and one of her favorite teachers, Nicole decided that's what she wants to study as well.

She plans to pursue a double major in physics and astronomy.

But that plan may change, since she just found out Harvard University has offered her a full scholarship, plus travel and book expenses. At Harvard, there's a lot of course work involved in both majors, she says, so she'll have to feel it out.

After getting the financial aid offer from Harvard, she danced around a

little bit (and she thinks her father may have cried), she says.

Then, she took herself off the scholarship list at school, Boskus says.

"She could have had \$500 or \$1,000 in her pocket for spending money, but she didn't want to take money away from another kid," he says.

That's the other thing about Nicole: her sweetness.

She made her first best friend in kindergarten and they are still tight, Nicole says. And she made another in fifth grade when the two were paired in a jump-rope competition.

"Her ability to maintain strong friendships" while doing competitive sports and top-level courses is amazing, Boskus says.

So, how did Nicole adapt to a tough start in life? Experts say early childhood trauma can affect a person for the rest of their days.

Her mother, Therese Gordon, says Nicole was abandoned a month after birth.

"That's a long time in China. She really formed attachments," Gordon says.

At 18 months, baby Nicole was terrified to be left at the Family School in Brewster, where her mother enrolled her when she had to go back to work.

"I spent the first two weeks there until lunchtime," Gordon says.

Though it was hard at first, little Nicole thrived at the Family School. By age 3, she could read. At age 5, she was asking for math problems, Gordon says.

Talking to Nicole about herself only deepens her mystique.

She makes herself sound average. She's not great about keeping her room clean or being on time, she says. She procrastinates and isn't overly organized. Yes, she did voluntarily take a Massive Open Online Course in astrophysics and cosmology, she says, but a lot of it went over her head.

After some probing, however, she admits with a smile, "I'm very particular about certain things, doing work in school, and doing things the best that I can."



Somehow, Nicole Gordon manages to excel in five AP classes and still make time to practice jump rope with her highly competitive team, the Bayside Skippers.

[RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]

Her goal for the valedictorian speech at graduation:

“Keep it short and entertaining.”

BARNSTABLE HIGH SCHOOL

# Devon Harris

By Geoff Spillane | gspillane@capecodonline.com

**D**evon Harris is certainly a consistent, punctual and civic-minded young man.

Since entering the Barnstable school system in kindergarten, the now senior at Barnstable High School has never missed a day of classes. In fact, he has never even been late for school.

That's perfect, on-time attendance for 13 years.

"I'm accustomed to not missing school," says Harris. "If I'm not in school, it just doesn't feel right."

And it's not as if he's gone to school while ill, either.

"I normally never get sick," he says.

There have been some close calls, though.

Last year he suffered sports injuries to his hand and broke three vertebrae in his back, with one requiring surgery.

"The only time I ever left school early was at noon on a Friday last year to get surgery on a finger," he says. "But one hour after the anesthesia wore off, I was back at school watching the (basketball) team."

"I have a high tolerance for pain," he says.

Harris also has a stellar record of achievement in the classroom and on athletic fields and courts.

He has been a member of the National Honor Society and was captain of the Red Raiders' varsity basketball team.

When he's not studying or playing sports, Harris can be found out-and-about in the community working as a volunteer.

His work includes assisting with Barnstable Recreation Department activities, and being a reading mentor to young children at the YMCA's Camp Lyndon and at the Hyannis West Elementary School.

He also relishes his role as big brother to Jaden, 9.

"I don't like to sit at home doing nothing," he says.

Harris has been accepted to several four-year colleges and universities throughout the country, but will likely attend Norwich University, a private military school in Vermont.



Inspired by his father, who has a career with the military in Las Vegas, Harris plans on joining the United States Air Force after college.

After college and a planned military career, Harris says he would "definitely" come back to Cape Cod.

When asked how his classmates would describe him, he quickly replied "athletic, easy to talk to and understanding."

Before he heads off to college, Harris offers his classmates some advice:

"Take advantage of what you can do to help yourself and others, and take time to manage everything well, whether it's sports or school work."

**“**Take advantage of what you can do to help yourself and others, and take time to manage everything well, whether it's sports or school work.”

**Devon Harris has had perfect, on-time attendance for 13 years. That dedication shows through in academics, sports and volunteerism.** [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]



STURGIS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL EAST

# Katrina Jackson

By Cynthia McCormick |  
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**K**atrina Jackson was so eager to start her career in the medical profession that she attended night school to become a certified nursing assistant while carrying a heavy course load at Sturgis Charter Public School in Hyannis.

Passing her licensing exam sophomore year and getting a part-time job at Bourne Manor Extended Care taught her time management skills, says Jackson, who also played junior varsity volleyball at Sturgis.

Volunteer positions at Cape Cod Hospital and at HopeHealth's McCarthy Care Center in her home town of Sandwich made her realize the importance of embracing the moment, Jackson says.

"You're being there for someone. You're being a companion," Jackson says about her time at the McCarthy hospice center.

As it turned out, Jackson would need both of these skills to successfully manage her own studies after being diagnosed with Lyme disease.

Doctors made the diagnosis after Jackson temporarily developed Bell's palsy, a paralysis of the facial muscles on one side of her face.

But Jackson and her parents believe she had been ill for a while and that her early stage Lyme disease was masked by concussive symptoms after she was struck in the head by a volleyball.

Jackson experienced nausea, headaches and light sensitivity. At one point she was so weak she needed a wheelchair to get around.

Treated with intravenous antibiotics by a pediatrician in Rhode Island, Jackson struggled to recall class lessons and read blocks of text.

"It's like my brain was hijacked," Jackson says.

Sturgis staff worked with her pediatrician to make accommodations, allowing Jackson to attend school part time some days and giving her extended time on tests.

"They were just so compassionate the whole time," Jackson says.

Sturgis teachers say they are impressed with Jackson's commitment to excellence in the international baccalaureate program.



**To get ahead on her medical career, Katrina Jackson became a certified nursing assistant in her sophomore year of high school.** [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]

**“** If you know you have to be strong, it helps you to balance yourself.”

Despite her illness, Jackson remained on task and highly motivated, they say.

History teacher Nadia Selim calls Jackson a leader in class discussions who is also humble and kind with classmates who may be struggling.

"She just has such a caring, nurturing way about her," Sturgis school counselor Deborah Hempel says.

Hempel says she has no doubt Katrina will bring these qualities to any medical school

she attends in the future.

"She's a special kid," Hempel says.

"School is obviously a priority, and she was determined not to let this illness slow her down."

It was a combination of persistence without pushing herself too hard that Jackson says helped her achieve her academic goals.

"I'd always be very aware of what my condition was at the time," says Jackson, who has been admitted to the Benton Scholars Program at Colgate University, which will allow her to spend part of her freshmen year in Europe studying the refugee crisis.

Lyme is "a very challenging disease, physically as well as mentally," Jackson says. "You'll get through it, especially if you find the right help."



BOURNE HIGH SCHOOL

# Nick Jerdee



**Nicholas Jerdee's accomplishments in the face of great odds has positioned him on track for success.**

[MERRILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

“

Never give up, believe in yourself. You can succeed if you're willing to work for it.”

**By Bill Higgins |** Contributing writer

**N**ick Jerdee was just 14, a freshman at Bourne High School, when his mom died after a long illness. His father wasn't part of his life. With only a grandfather, an older sister in Arizona and a couple of other relatives, he felt alone and vulnerable.

“It was a defining moment,” Nick says. “I had to make big boy decisions. I wanted to be good for mom.”

Greg and Christie Wirsén, of Buzzards Bay, the parents of Nick's best friend, Zak, became legal guardians, providing a comforting, structured environment. Nick will be forever grateful. “I could've been shipped off. It was a blessing what

the Wirséns did for me. They will always be part of my life,” he says.

Young Nick's maturity impressed the Wirséns.

“Nick said he wanted to make something of his life, and that moving away ... would likely lead him down paths that would not make his mom proud,” Greg Wirsén says. “We set priorities: Family, education, working and learning how to be responsible, then sports and friends. It was a learning process, but we are so impressed with the amazing changes he has made.”

Jerdee's accomplishments in the face of great odds make him a Rising Star worth watching. His “big boy decisions” included enlisting in the Air National Guard after his junior year at

Bourne. He leaves for basic training this summer. His enrollment at Framingham State University, paid for by his military commitment, will be delayed until the 2018 spring semester.

“College is important and I want to serve my country,” he says. “My goal is to become a firefighter to help my community.”

Nick says his grandfather, William Mortimer Sr., of Bourne, has had the greatest influence on him. “He taught me how to focus on the big picture.” Nick wrote and delivered the eulogy at his mom's funeral. “She was a fun person and I wanted everyone to remember good times,” he says.

After some rough patches, Nick is most proud of making the honor roll his senior year. “That would

make mom the happiest.”

He was also captain of the football team and takes seriously his influence on underclassmen. He is inspired by Boston Celtics rookie star Jaylen Brown and the motto FCHW: “Faith, Consistency, Hard Work.”

“Never give up, believe in yourself,” says Nick. “You can succeed if you're willing to work for it.”

Bourne High School guidance counselor Kimberly Iannucci is one of many rooting for Jerdee.

“Nick continues to amaze me with his resilience and determination. He came to a fork in the road in his life and he's focused on the path ahead,” Iannucci says. “I can't wait to see what he has in store for his future.”



DENNIS-YARMOUTH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

# Michael Julian



**Michael Julian has refused to be limited by epilepsy. He has excelled in sports and academics.** [MERRILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

“

Don't think you can't do something because you have epilepsy. If you work hard enough, you can do anything.”

**By Madeleine List** | [mlist@capecodonline.com](mailto:mlist@capecodonline.com)

**A**t 3 years old, Michael Julian was diagnosed with electrical status epilepticus in sleep, a type of epilepsy that can cause night seizures.

Now, 15 years later and after being diagnosed with another form of epilepsy at age 11, Michael is a varsity athlete, member of the National Honor Society and a soon-to-be college freshman who was accepted to all 10 colleges to which he applied.

He has no regrets.

“There's nothing I would've done differently,” Michael says. “I'm definitely glad with the outcome of

everything.”

School wasn't easy for Michael, especially in elementary school when he had limited use of his left hand and missed many days because of doctor appointments and medical tests.

But Michael was always committed to learning, says Lory Stewart, former director of instructional technology for the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District, who began working closely with Michael in third grade. Michael had trouble reading fine print, holding a pencil or pen and, as he advanced through school, staying organized, Stewart says.

In sixth grade, Michael began working on a laptop and used software

programs to assist him with school. In eighth grade, when the school district was starting to introduce eighth-graders into the high school by their choice, Michael couldn't wait to go.

“He fell in love with Dennis-Yarmouth High School the moment he walked through the doors,” Stewart says.

Michael agrees.

“I love my school,” he says.

Michael played varsity basketball and is the captain of his school's golf team. One of his proudest moments was when he was chosen to be a student ambassador, a title reserved for a select group of upperclassmen who help new students get acquainted with the school.

Besides excelling in sports and academics, Michael worked summers at Showtime Pizza in Dennis and volunteers with a church group at Our Lady of the Cape in Brewster.

As he looks to the future, Michael, who wants to study health care or sports management in college, knows that with hard work he can achieve anything. His epilepsy will not get in his way.

“I tend to just not think about it that much,” he says. “I've gotten to do pretty much everything I've wanted to do without epilepsy holding me back.”

That unwillingness to be slowed down by his disorder is due in part, Michael says, to his supportive parents who always encouraged him and never suggested that epilepsy could limit his abilities. This message of strength is something Michael says he would convey to any young person with epilepsy.

“I would say just do everything you can,” he says. “Don't think you can't do something because you have epilepsy. If you work hard enough, you can do anything.”



BARNSTABLE HIGH SCHOOL

# Kimberly Kalis

By Laurie Higgins | Contributing writer

When Barnstable High School senior Kimberly Kalis was in second grade, she was paired with a girl in her class with Down syndrome. The girls became good friends and that friendship helped Kimberly discover how much she loves working with children with special needs. It has been part of a trajectory that has helped her choose her future profession as a special-education elementary teacher.

She has already spent years changing the lives of those with special needs. She joined the Best Buddies Club in ninth grade and became the president of the club this year. Best Buddies is an international club that pairs people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities to do activities together and build friendships.

As president of the club, Kimberly became dedicated to making the joint activities more interesting and varied. Each week she plans two different activities: a craft and a physical activity.

“One of their favorites is hallway bowling,” she says. “We use liter soda bottles and put them in the hall while the other kids are doing crafts. We’ve actually gone out real bowling, too, one time.”

Through the Best Buddies, Kimberly started a “Spread the Word to End the Word” campaign at her high school to educate people on how hurtful the word “retarded” is even when used jokingly. She’s creating a mural in the school with an image of the world and a large letter “R.” She’s going to have people put their handprints over the letter to show that they are going to stop using the word at school.

Kimberly dances six days a week at the Beth Walsh Dance Center. She began assistant teaching there when she was 13. A year later, she began to work one-on-one with a dance student with Down syndrome. She helps

her break down the dance steps and goes to her house once a week to help her practice.

“She actually does amazing,” Kimberly says. “You’d be surprised at how well she does. She is so fun to work with and she puts a smile on my face. I love the days I teach her.”

On Sundays, Kimberly works as a personal care assistant to a girl with a rare form of cerebral palsy called Pitt Hopkins disease. The girl is nonverbal and in a wheelchair full time, so Kimberly takes care of her so her parents can get house and yard work done. They also do fun things together.



Kimberly Kalis has a long history of helping people with special needs. Among other things, she’s president of the Best Buddies Club and plans to become a special-education elementary teacher. [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]

“ I definitely learned over the years to give everything my all and to not give up.”

“A few weeks ago, I took her to the Barnstable High School play ‘Into the Woods’ and she loved it,” she says.

Kimberly is secretary of the student council, and as part of that role for the past three years she has helped do

the twice-a-year blood drives held by Cape Cod Healthcare at the high school.

“It’s really amazing to see how many kids are willing to donate and how much blood we get,” she says.



STURGIS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL WEST

# Chadwick MacMillan

By Chris Lindahl | clindahl@capecodonline.com

**A**t first glance, it might be hard for one to reconcile the seemingly conflicting interests of Chadwick MacMillan.

The Sturgis Charter Public School West Campus senior earned early acceptance to Columbia University, where he plans to study math, a hard discipline based on measurables and constants and truths, and eventually earn a doctoral degree. But in addition to his studies, MacMillan is also eager to further explore another of his passions: fashion.

For MacMillan, math is a game with boundaries, the rules begging to be pushed to their limits; while the art of fashion offers endless creative possibilities with near-boundless parameters.

"I think they cater to both sides of my nature," he says. "I just think both sides are interesting."

As MacMillan looks forward to the enormous array of sights, sounds, culture and intellectual stimulation he'll find in Manhattan, it's clear he'll leave behind a legacy on the Cape. He volunteers at the Cape Cod Literacy Council's English as a second language classes and was selected by the Sturgis faculty to represent the school at the International Baccalaureate World Conference. He also founded two clubs at Sturgis: one focusing on fashion and the other, Spanish Club, where he and other students discuss a variety of topics in the language.

"I want to learn (Spanish) because I want to travel Europe when I'm older," he says. "I'm interested in languages, I'm interested in using them."

But before he heads to college, he's got another goal. Yet another of his passions is running:



**What do math, Spanish and fashion have in common? Chad MacMillan has a passion for all of them.** [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]

MacMillan is on both the charter school's cross country and track teams. He's hoping to make it to states as a shotputter, a new event he picked up this year after running distance earlier in his athletic career. And that feeds into still another new interest, weightlifting.

MacMillan says he entered high school with insecurities and fears that he let take hold of him. He turned to fashion first for aesthetics, which resulted in what he says were formulaic outfits. Once he

started exploring the possibilities — scouring the internet for unique second-hand designer pieces and vintage wares — he found something bigger.

"I wanted to focus on expressing myself and exploring creative options," he says. "Fashion helped

me be a better person."

MacMillan plans to take that interest with him to Columbia, where he hopes to start a college-level fashion club. He's also interested in the possibility of starting his own one-man clothing line.

**“** I wanted to focus on expressing myself and exploring creative options. Fashion helped me be a better person.”



STURGIS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL EAST

# Taylor Martin-Graham

By Matt Goisman | mgoisman@capecodonline.com

**T**aylor Martin-Graham, a senior at Sturgis East, was a Girl Scout throughout her childhood in Falmouth. But her troop began to dwindle as she got older, eventually all the way down to just three girls.

So, Martin-Graham switched to the Sea Scouts, a Boy Scouts of America coed program for ages 14-21. At 14 she joined the crew of the SSS Nobska, named after Woods Hole's famous lighthouse, and over the next five years took on larger leadership roles: yeoman, boatswain, then flotilla boatswain for all of New England.

She was elected boatswain's mate for the Northeast region in March. Within a year she'll be regional boatswain, the senior scout for flotillas stretching from Maine to Virginia.

Not bad for someone who joined Sea Scouts with much simpler goals.

"I joined Sea Scouts to overcome my fear of the water, and to this day it is hands down the best decision I've ever made," Martin-Graham says. "Being on the water is like being able to travel wherever you want without something in your way."

Being a Sea Scout has taken Martin-Graham all over the country: organizing an annual Safety at Sea Regatta in Connecticut; representing the Cape Cod and Islands Council at the National Youth Leadership Training Academy in Maryland; even flying all the way to Puget Sound last summer for the Sea Scout Experience Advanced Leadership (SEAL) program.

Scouts in SEAL go through daily rotations that test seamanship, navigation, piloting and even cooking on a 65-foot training vessel. She says it was stressful, but organization and preparation helped her easily pass.

Martin-Graham was the last SEAL participant to take a turn as boatswain. So, each day leading up to it she interviewed

previous boatswains, took pictures and kept notes in a journal.

The program requires scouts to successfully tie 15 knots within three minutes, so she spent the cross-country flight doing nothing but tying knots.

"People next to me wanted to know how to do it, so now I'm like teaching people around me in their seats," Martin-Graham says. "I practiced night and day."

Martin-Graham is just the third scout from the Nobska to participate in SEAL, and the first since 2004. She's still a boatswain's mate on the Nobska, while her commitments at various levels keep her busy most weekends.

Even with all that, she manages to pursue other interests such as softball,

kickboxing, aerial yoga and serving as president of the cooking club she started at Sturgis East.

"Very determined young lady," says Nobska skipper Alan Beal. "I won't hear from her for a bit, and then all of a sudden I'll say, 'Are you going to do this?' And she (says), 'Oh, it's all done.'"

Martin-Graham has been accepted to 10 colleges and says she wants to study environmental law and international business.

Wherever she goes, Martin-Graham is sure to keep Sea Scouts in her life.

"It's taught me so much about controlling anxiety," Martin-Graham says. "I started out as that really quiet kid, pretty shy, not outgoing. And now I give presentations to hundreds of people."



“

I started out as that really quiet kid, pretty shy, not outgoing. And now I give presentations to hundreds of people.”

**Taylor Martin-Graham's search for a Girl Scouts alternative opened the door to Sea Scouts — a perfect fit for a shy young girl who would blossom into an ambitious, confident leader.** [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]

## BARNSTABLE HIGH SCHOOL

# Nathan Mulone

“

Going up to Children's Hospital, you would see people worse off than you going through even harder struggles. And it helped you realize how to treat others.”

By Paul Pronovost | pronovost@capecodonline.com

**W**hen Nathan Mulone stepped onto the lacrosse field as an eighth-grader, a senior on the team made fun of him.

Though barely noticeable now, the traces of scars between his upper lip and nose are reminders that he was born with orofacial clefts, more commonly known as a cleft lip and a cleft palate. As a result, Nathan has faced surgery and stigma throughout his young life.

“It made me angry,” Nathan says

of the senior's taunting. “But luckily I had friends that supported me through it. And it just kind of made me want to get better at lacrosse and prove him wrong.”

And that is exactly what he did. He has played five years in the Barnstable High School lacrosse program and has been the starting varsity goaltender for two years. There's a lot of pressure playing between the pipes, but nothing compared with other challenges he has faced.

Since infancy, specialists at Boston Children's Hospital have worked to repair the clefts, so Nathan's early years have been filled with a long and often painful string of doctor visits, dental work and surgical repairs.

After one surgery, at age 1, his arms were immobilized for a month to keep him from pulling at the stitches. Another surgery, at 10, was to remove a part of his hip and place it into his jaw to fill the gap. There were other surgeries as well, along with countless follow-up visits and adjustments to his teeth.

Nathan stayed positive through it all. The way he sees it, he's the lucky one.

“It really helped me appreciate other people's disabilities,” he says. “Going up to Children's Hospital, you would see people worse off than you going through even harder struggles. And it helped you realize how to treat others.”

Of course, having so many medical appointments meant missing a fair amount of school. And that meant piles of makeup

work would be waiting for him. But Nathan never allowed his situation to become an excuse. “I strive to be a good student, making sure I get all the homework done and study and all that.”

That work ethic led to the University of Massachusetts Amherst accepting him into the Commonwealth Honors College as an engineering student, where he will begin studies alongside his brother in the fall. He would love to join the space program someday.

When asked how he stayed so positive through the adversity, Nathan shifted the focus to others.

“I got a lot of support from my family, especially my twin brother, Evan. He always would help me through it. Especially at school when people would comment on it, he would always be there to stick up for me.”

His sister, Megan, who is eight years older, remembers when Nathan was born with the orofacial clefts. “Nathan's smile as a baby was so huge it filled his entire face,” she remembers. “It made every joke, every silly face, every tickle time that much more special.”

“Even through his pain and discomfort (of surgery), there'd be a sneaky little pink glimpse of a smile behind the bandages. His huge gap smile was gone, but his infectious happiness certainly was not.”

For his part, Nathan has a simple philosophy on how to approach life.

“To persevere and treat others the way they want to be treated. Make more friends than enemies and I think other people will help you through your struggles. And if you persevere you can get through yours as well.”



**Lacrosse goalie Nate Mulone had something to prove. By all accounts, he has succeeded with an impressive work ethic and a big heart.**

[RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]



BARNSTABLE HIGH SCHOOL

# Caroline Neville

By Laurie Higgins | Contributing Writer

**B**arnstable senior Caroline Neville was raised by a single mother and her family's financial situation wasn't always stable. At times, her mother had to work multiple jobs to keep the family afloat. But despite the difficulties she has faced, she decided to do positive things with her life.

One of the things she is most passionate about is working with special needs children through the Cape Cod Challenger Club. The club provides athletic, recreational and social activities for children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities. Caroline started volunteering when she was in eighth grade and has continued for five years.

"They get so excited to be able to play with you," she says. "It's been a huge part of my life. It was a healthy outlet for me when my parents got divorced. It got me out of the house and I really love doing it."

In her junior year, Caroline joined the Barnstable Youth Commission, a group of about 10 high-schoolers who work to educate about and prevent some issues faced by their peers. Highlights of her work there include working on a Substance Abuse Prevention Forum and a 7th Grade Youth Summit.

The Youth Commission also organized a very successful "Ready, Set, Work!" youth job fair that attracted 22 vendors. Students learned how to fill out job applications, write resumes and practice interviewing.

For the past year, Caroline has put a lot of her energy into a dating abuse project she is trying to get implemented at her school. She has worked with the One Love Foundation that was created by the mother of Yeardley Love, a University of Virginia senior who was beaten to death by her ex-boyfriend.

"A lot of people don't know what the boundaries are," Caroline says. "We would like to have a talk for seniors about the early warning signs of abuse and the red flags like having a controlling personality and how it happens to both men and women."

She thinks senior year is an especially important time for frank discussions on issues like dating abuse because once students go on to college, they are on their own and might not know what to do when caught in a bad situation.

In addition to a passion for social justice, Caroline is also a determined student. In freshman year, she took her first AP class in human geography. She says that class set her up for success for the rest of high school because it pushed her to take harder classes. She took two AP classes



sophomore year and five in both her junior and senior years. Her senior year AP psychology class showed her a career path as a clinical psychologist.

"I've always wanted to help people," she says. "People helped me and my family when we were struggling and I want to do the same."

**Caroline Neville, motivated by gratitude, has become a mover and a shaker.** [RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]

“Just be yourself and don't let other people determine who you are. Sticking to your beliefs and values is really important.”



UPPER CAPE COD REGIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL

# Lana Nguyen



**Come fall, Lana Nguyen will be studying marine engineering at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Right now, she's building an 11-foot dinghy from scratch for her senior capstone project.** [MERRILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

**By Ethan Genter** | [egenter@capecodonline.com](mailto:egenter@capecodonline.com)

**F**reshmen at Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School all go through Exploratory Program, where they get a chance to try all of the school's 13 shop areas. For Lana Nguyen, a student from Wareham, she knew she wanted to go into the marine technology program once she was able to get out on the Cape Cod Canal in the school's boat.

"It was so much fun," she says.

Now a senior, Lana is known for her prowess around seacrafts. She will be headed to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy to study marine engineering in the fall.

"In a technical program dominated by males, Lana outshines them all,"

her school counselor, Rachel Kerrigan, writes in a letter. "Whether it involves breaking down and repairing an engine, welding or electrical work, Lana is engaged, excited and the epitome of an outstanding craftsman."

In the winter of her junior year, Lana started working at MacDougalls' Cape Cod Marine Service, a boatyard in Falmouth. At first she was working with enclosures, which involved a lot of sewing, she says. But once spring rolled around, she asked if she could move over to the mechanical side of things.

The move made a few people curious, but her co-workers have been supportive throughout her time there, Lana says.

"It's not every day that a girl wants to work on engines," she says. She

started by shadowing other mechanics and has worked her way up to solo projects. Her work there, which involves everything up to fixing boat engines, has garnered glowing praise from her employer, who was quoted saying, "in my 20 years of marine engineering, she has shown the most potential of any person I have worked with."

With the school year starting to wind down, Lana is continuing to push her studies with a loaded class schedule and an impressive senior capstone project for which she is building an 11-foot nutshell pram.

"Who wouldn't want to build something from scratch?" she asks. "To take it from paper and make it into a reality is really exciting."

“

It's not every day that a girl wants to work on engines.”



UPPER CAPE COD REGIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL

# Benjamin O'Brien

By Patrick Flanary | Contributing writer

**B**enjamin O'Brien sets his sights on the stars. A year ago, Benjamin O'Brien spent two weeks out of school and in the hospital for what he now describes as "a little adventure I had." That adventure was a serious infection in his leg, something that could have set back many students in a similar position -- but not O'Brien. "It's not impossible to come back from stuff like that," he says. "Everybody supported me."

"He epitomizes what I hope for in a student and community member," says school counselor Rachel Kerrigan, who nominated O'Brien as a Rising Star. "Ben overcame a life-threatening illness as a junior and came out of it without a hiccup on his academic record."

O'Brien, who lives in Bourne and is a senior in the environmental technology program at Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School, overcame great odds. Perhaps his ability to bounce back under difficult circumstances comes from his leadership roles as cross country team captain and president of the National Honor Society.

Known for his humility and selflessness as much as for his academic excellence, O'Brien will attend the Florida Institute of Technology on the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, which provides tuition for up to eight

semesters. He's quick to credit his high school for the tools that support his passion.

"Somebody who goes in for environmental science will come out prepared with everything they need to start an environmental job," O'Brien says. "What they had was levels above what I had seen before. Before, I had a minor passion for science. And then coming into that shop gave me a far greater interest in it."

Much of O'Brien's love for environmental tech crystallized several years ago in Guatemala, where he helped hundreds of village children gain access to cleaner food. He helped build a hydroponics farm which helped provided tilapia for an orphanage.

This fall, O'Brien will pursue a degree in astronomy in the state that gave birth to countless space missions. "The whole science behind it is crazy to wrap your head around," he says. For now, O'Brien continues to work a co-op position at JC Engineering

in Wareham, performing land surveys and construction. He also works part time at a supermarket.

These days you could say O'Brien is looking toward the stars. Or as Chuck Lawrence, one of his instructors, puts it: "He has the wisdom of a man three times his age."



**As a junior, Ben O'Brien overcame a life-threatening illness and maintained academic excellence. He's got a passion for environmental science, which he will be pursuing in college. [RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]**

**“** I like to think that my actions reflect my personality.”



MASHPEE MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL

# Cecelia Piermattei

By Christine Legere | clegere@capecodonline.com

**M**ost teens don't begin the transition to adulthood until college, where they ease into the world of responsibility somewhat gently.

But for Cecelia Piermattei, known as Cece, matters normally handled by adults were abruptly laid on her shoulders as a freshman at Mashpee High School, when her mother had her first seizure and was diagnosed with epilepsy and later dementia.

With her mom in and out of the hospital over the next four years, Piermattei was forced to quickly become self-sufficient. That might mean finding a place at a friend's to bunk for a week or more, making household decisions, covering all her own expenses, or just cooking her own dinner after a long day of school, sports and work.

"I took time management really seriously," Piermattei says.

Throughout her high school years, Piermattei has held one year-round job at a local restaurant during the school year and adds a second every summer, lifeguarding for Mashpee. Sometimes she takes on a third job, cleaning houses in New Seabury for a little extra cash.

Still, Piermattei never loses focus on school, where she is currently taking Advanced Placement statistics, extracurricular activities like the ProStart culinary arts team which took first place in a recent statewide competition, and sports.

"When it first started happening, I was already involved in sports and had a good head," says the varsity field hockey and softball player. "I just sucked it up. I worked a lot. I took in the reality that this wasn't something in my control."

Her senior year presented the biggest challenge.

"Even though I made so many other decisions on my own, college choice is such a long-term decision," she says. "I was afraid of making the wrong one."

Piermattei applied to 12 schools and was



**During an exceptionally complicated time in her life, Cecelia Piermattei found her "safe place" in sports. She'd like to work with student athletes.** [RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]

accepted at all 12. Among her top choices are Salve Regina University, Bridgewater State University and Flagler College in Florida.

She plans to be a business major and is leaning toward sports management.

"Because sports was my safe place throughout this, I'd like to work with student athletes," she says.

School counselor Lindsay Kett admires Piermattei's resiliency. "To the eye, it looks like she has the perfect life," Kett says. "She's quite a persevering young woman: an inspiration to all."

"Cece comes to school every day with a positive attitude," Kett says. "It's that ability that makes her successful."

**“** I just sucked it up. I worked a lot. I took in the reality that this wasn't something in my control.”



MONOMOY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

# Hannah Potter



**Hannah Potter credits team sports for providing a template for success. She'll be playing field hockey for St. Anselm in the fall.** [MERILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

“Building relationships with your peers is one of the most beautiful things you can have in your life. It gives you a sense of purpose, makes them smile and you smile. It makes it better going about your day.”

By Doug Fraser | [dfraser@capecodonline.com](mailto:dfraser@capecodonline.com)

Like a lot of students on the cusp of college, and the adult world lying just beyond, Hannah Potter's vision of her future is somewhat, but not quite, in focus. The 17-year-old senior at Monomoy Regional High School selected St. Anselm College in New Hampshire as a marketing major.

“I definitely want to learn and succeed as much as I can in marketing,” Potter says. “Hopefully bring something out of that to launch me into my future.”

“Launch” is an appropriate word choice for Potter, who has that kind of forward-looking energy propelling her through life, finding ways to help others even as she reaches one

milestone and moves on to the next. Her health teacher, Angelina Chikala, lauded her organizational skills, creative ideas and strong work ethic in nominating Potter as a Rising Star.

Potter will be playing field hockey for St. Anselm and credits the sport, in which she is a perennial all-star, team captain her junior and senior years, and Cape and Islands League Most Valuable Player for 2016, for providing a template for success.

“I always had my best grades in term one because of my in-season routine,” she says. “I have a routine and it keeps me organized, and everyone is there to support you.”

To Potter, it's the team that's always behind individual achievements, and she grew up admiring the

Harwich High School field hockey teams coached by the legendary Cheryl Poore.

“Everyone knows how great the Harwich field hockey program has been and I wanted to be part of that great team,” she says. “I wanted to be part of a tight-knit unit.”

Unlike the large blade of a hockey stick, the field hockey stick seems constructed to frustrate control. It's too small, crooked and rounded on the back side for a ball that can bounce erratically on turf. Potter appreciates that its quirks thwarts individual effort and rewards the passing game.

“It's better than shooting, being a one-man team, because it's how you bring a team together as a unit,” she says.

That's her approach to problem solving as well. She helped start a Mentors in Violence Prevention program at Monomoy with the idea that students moving on to college needed to be prepared for the reality of dating violence and what consent really means. She is the Student Council president, member of the yearbook and spirit committees, a Best Buddies member and a Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association student ambassador.

“I've always been wanting to give back to my community because I love Harwich so much,” Potter says. “I definitely plan on continuing that in college and giving back to the community in Manchester and to the student body,” she says.



ST. JOHN PAUL II HIGH SCHOOL

# Meghan Powell

By Patti Bangert | pbangert@capecodonline.com

If wisdom comes with age, then Meghan Powell is a very old soul. She exudes a purity and innocence but with a maturity and depth of character that belies her youth.

Maureen Hufnagle, a guidance counselor at St. John Paul II High School who nominated Meghan for Rising Stars, says that Meghan's strong character is evident to classmates, teammates and teachers alike. But Meghan's biggest fan and supporter has got to be her mother, who also nominated her. "I look back at what I had accomplished at 17," Katie Powell writes about her daughter, "and cannot even compare."

"My daughter amazes me with her ability to juggle an incredibly packed schedule and still come out smiling," she writes.

The feelings of admiration are mutual. "She's super woman," Meghan says, and recalls her young mother raising Meghan, 6, a 4-year-old son and a newborn when their Navy dad was deployed. "She's a very selfless person," Meghan says. "That's something I'd like to emulate. She's a huge role model for me."

Military life entailed new orders and frequent moves, Meghan's mom writes, "which meant picking up and starting over again and again."

"It was hard," Meghan says, "but it formed me into the person I am. You have to make new friends every two to three years. ... It makes you an outgoing person. ... You try everything, which is really cool.

"It helped me appreciate other people and cultures. I've done city schools. I've lived in mainly immigrant towns and communities, so I've seen a little bit of everything and you appreciate all different types of people and what they have to offer.

"The hardest part about being a Navy brat was my dad being absent. When I was little, he missed almost every Christmas and birthday. He did a lot of tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was gone more than he was home.

That part, I would never do over."

But Meghan is quick to point out the blessings. "It made me super close to my brothers," she says. "My brothers and I are like best friends. We're always there for each other."

She also cherishes the travel opportunities that military life afforded her family: "I love traveling. It's so important, I think, to see as much as you can.

"I've done two mission trips to Ecuador through my school, and those have been so life changing. We don't go down to build a house or a school. ... It's being there to share in someone's joys and struggles." That, she says, "can make the biggest change sometimes."

A deep desire to change lives is the driving force behind Meghan's plans for the future. She'll be heading to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh for a five-year, accelerated program for speech-language pathology. She'll

have bachelor's and master's degrees when she graduates. She'll also major in Spanish, a language she plans to put to good use at home and abroad.

Meghan became fascinated with speech therapy when her brother and another 4-year-old boy who lived on their street were both seeing a speech therapist in the neighborhood. Meghan would tag along, and when the therapist took note of Meghan's curiosity, she let Meghan observe the sessions. Meghan would also sometimes play with the neighbor boy, who didn't speak at all.

When Meghan left to spend the summer with her grandparents on Cape Cod, the little boy showed up for his speech session. "Where's Meghan?" he said. It was his first complete sentence.

"Since then," Meghan says, "I was like, 'whoa, this is the coolest thing ever!'"

**As a Navy kid, Meghan Powell had a childhood filled with change. Her optimistic outlook and willingness to take chances earned her some serious sea legs.** [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]



“

"Mom would always tell us, 'Everything's OK. It's in God's hands.' That's been a huge part of my life. ... It's been my rock. My family is my rock. And my faith is my rock."



STURGIS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL WEST

# John “JD” Snowman

By Maryjo Wheatley | Contributing writer

Not all education happens in a classroom. For John “JD” Snowman, it was cross-country running that taught him valuable life lessons. He says during his freshman and sophomore years in high school he was having a hard time with academics.

“I used to be stubborn,” he says. “I didn’t want to work because I didn’t know what I wanted to do.”

But running changed all that for JD. Running, he says, gave him clear and measurable goals that provided him with a sense of purpose.

JD also learned that mindset is everything.

“You can be physically as fit as you want, but you have to be mentally prepared,” he says. “You can’t have the mindset that you might not do well in a race. You just have to tell yourself – this is how I did it in training, and now I’m going to do it.”

This work ethic and positive attitude helped him to succeed in running.

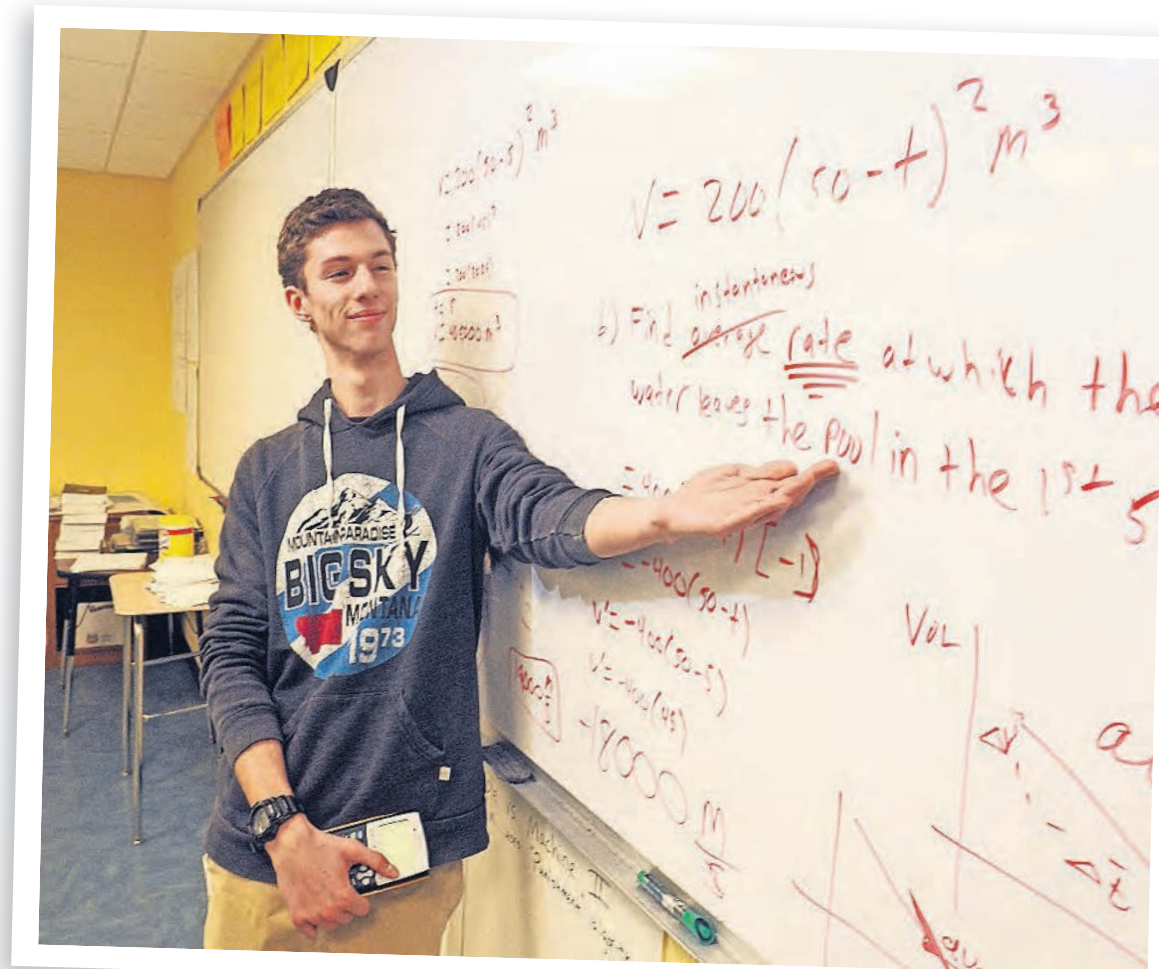
JD was captain of Sturgis West’s cross-country team during his junior and senior years and helped lead the team to victories at local and state levels.

He then took what he learned from running and applied it to his academics.

JD says one of his best moments in high school was when he was a junior and saw his final grades for that year. He had done well, but it wasn’t just the grades that pleased him. It was his overall self-improvement that made him feel happy.

JD also has another side. His school counselor, Kristin Nissen, writes in her letter of recommendation that JD’s sense of respect for community sets him apart. She says his peers and teachers acknowledged JD’s generous spirit by electing him to represent Sturgis West at MassStar Citizenship Conference, a statewide program where students participate in leadership training and civic education.

His compassion and desire to help others was put into action when he was commuting to Boston for an elite running team and his



driving route brought him through a section where homeless people solicit money.

He remembers thinking that he couldn’t imagine what it would be like on a freezing night to be without a home.

That’s when he came up with the idea of “CARry Kits,” a 6-by-6-inch bag filled with items such as gloves, lip balm, a toothbrush or deodorant – ordinary things most people take for granted.

JD took his idea a step further and wrote to Ocean State Job Lot, convincing the store to sell these items to him at cost. He also contacted his youth citizen group to hatch a plan for a better and larger distribution method.

JD has a simple philosophy: If you can’t figure out your purpose, figure out your passion, and it will lead you right to what you need in life.

**Cross-country running provided JD Snowman with clear and measurable goals and a sense of purpose. Another interest of his is math. It’s fitting that, in this photo, JD uses calculus to study motion.** [RON SCHLOERB/CAPE COD TIMES]

“Find your vision, work as hard as you can ... and don’t settle for less.”



## NAUSET REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

# Hanna Sweeney

By Haven Orecchio-Egresitz | horecchio@capecodonline.com

**H**anna Sweeney, an 18-year-old Nauset Regional High School senior, believes the most important thing in life is helping others and being passionate about it.

Sweeney, of Orleans, lives that passion through her involvement in activism and human-rights organizations on campus.

As president of the feminism club at Nauset, Sweeney has worked to raise awareness about women's rights and gender equality through organizing trips to the Women's March in Boston and working with other members to create posters honoring influential women in history and displaying them on campus for Women's History Month.

Sweeney's poster featured Maya Angelou, whom she selected, she says, because of the author's ability to take the struggles she experienced and turn it into literature.

She also works with the Human Rights Academy and the Gay and Straight Alliance at the school.

"Over my thirty years of teaching English at Nauset Regional High School, Hanna Sweeney has been the only student who asked for and received permission from me to take two English Advanced Placement courses simultaneously," Angela Mosesso, English department chair at Nauset, writes in a letter of recommendation. "Although Hanna was the only junior in my senior class, she was a role model to the seniors, both in asserting her ideas with meticulous supporting evidence as well as listening to theirs with care and compassion."

Mosesso says she respects Sweeney's ability to make her values a reality, which includes pushing to make feminine-hygiene products available on campus.

Sweeney, who currently works on an independent study of women's literature with Mosesso, says that throughout high school she wanted to take courses with the department chair. It was through Mosesso's classes that she found her passion for English, she says.

In the fall, she will study English and women's gender studies at Columbia University, where she was accepted early decision.

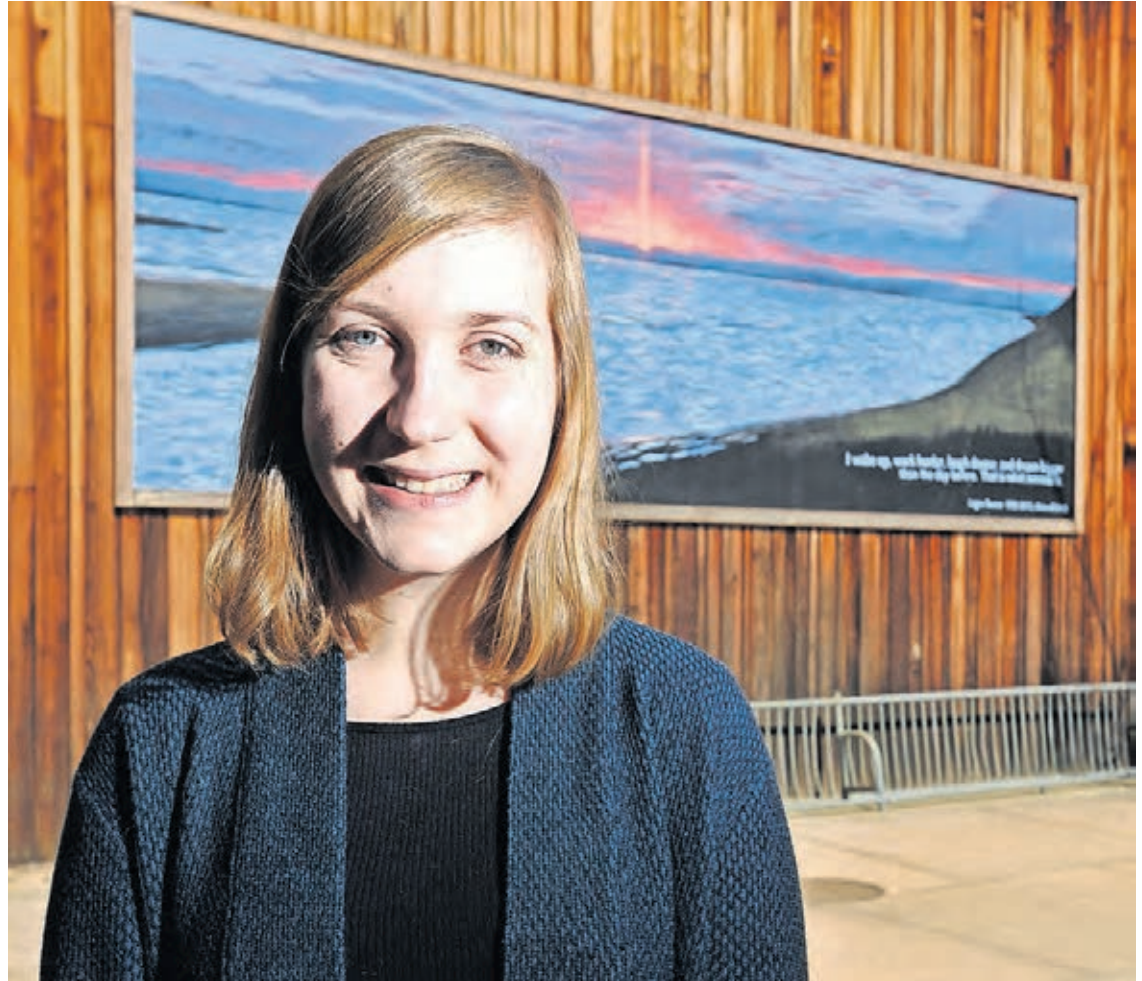
Sweeney plans to bring her passion for activism with her to the Ivy League university, where

she intends to join Columbia Democrats, and participate in lobbying in Washington, D.C., and No Red Tape, an organization working to end sexual violence and rape culture at the school, she says.

"It's definitely been a crazy year to have been so involved in so many different activism clubs," Sweeney says. "A lot of President Trump's policies attack women's rights."

After the presidential election, she says, there were many Nauset students who needed comforting, which inspired Sweeney and others to organize.

"The Women's March really empowered the feminism club," she says. "... I also really enjoyed working with the other activism groups on campus because it reminded me that we're all working towards bettering our campus and community together."



**Hanna Sweeney expresses her passion for helping others through activism. She'll be bringing that passion to Columbia University in the fall. [STEVE HEASLIP/CAPE COD TIMES]**

**“** It's definitely been a crazy year to have been so involved in so many different activism clubs.”



CONGRATULATIONS TO EACH OF THE
 

# 2017 Rising Stars nominees

<b>Max Abrams</b> Falmouth High School	<b>Danielle Derosier</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Timothy Jordan</b> Saint John Paul II High School	<b>Daniel Reilly</b> Mashpee Middle-High School
<b>Jacob Ashworth</b> Bourne High School	<b>Amber DiBona</b> Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School	<b>Rohan Kirlew</b> Falmouth High School	<b>Meghan Remillard</b> Saint John Paul II High School
<b>Jackson Badot</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Jenni-Rose DiCecco</b> Falmouth High School	<b>Allison Kondracki</b> Mashpee Middle-High School	<b>Aurelia Reynolds</b> Tabor Academy
<b>Tsuf Baumflek</b> Sturgis Charter Public School East	<b>Sean Farrington</b> Saint John Paul II High School	<b>Joshua Kowzic</b> Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School	<b>Aleela Rose</b> Monomoy Regional High School
<b>Luisa Bocconcelli</b> Falmouth Academy	<b>Megan Flory</b> Falmouth Academy	<b>Maya Krieger-DeWitt</b> Nauset Regional High School	<b>Molly Rowland</b> Sturgis Charter Public School West
<b>Josephine Brennan</b> Falmouth High School	<b>Daniel Fortier Jr.</b> Sandwich High School	<b>Anna Larsson</b> Mashpee Middle-High School	<b>Merrick Rubinstein</b> Bourne High School
<b>Merit Brent</b> Nauset Regional High School	<b>Parker Freedman</b> Bourne High School	<b>Rebecca Leduc</b> Sturgis Charter Public School East	<b>Brynne Sanntos</b> Mashpee Middle-High School
<b>Juliana Browne</b> Trinity Christian Academy	<b>Jack Giberti</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Daniel Loiselle</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Isabella Shaw</b> Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School
<b>Sarah Buchanan</b> Sturgis Charter Public School West	<b>Nicholas Glaser</b> Saint John Paul II High School	<b>Yuntao (Tommy) Ma</b> Cape Cod Academy	<b>Graham Smith</b> Monomoy Regional High School
<b>Samantha Carlowicz</b> Saint John Paul II High School	<b>Emily Greco</b> Monomoy Regional High School	<b>Jenny McMullen</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Emily Spinello</b> Sturgis Charter Public School East
<b>Jashan Chopra</b> Mashpee Middle-High School	<b>Théo Guérin</b> Falmouth Academy	<b>Tannah O'Brien</b> Mashpee Middle-High School	<b>Jillian Raye Stevens</b> Nauset High School
<b>David Coakley</b> Cape Cod Regional Technical High School	<b>Lauren Handel</b> Monomoy Regional High School	<b>Nathan Pappalardo</b> Sturgis Charter Public School East	<b>Katya Thorup</b> Nauset Middle School
<b>Colleen Cronin</b> Monomoy Regional High School	<b>Eliza Hawthorne</b> Monomoy Regional High School	<b>Grace Peterson</b> Falmouth High School	<b>John Turner</b> Falmouth High School
<b>Danielle Curtin</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Lillian Healy</b> Sturgis Charter Public School West	<b>Sierra Proft</b> Sturgis Charter Public School East	<b>Matthew West</b> Nauset Regional High School
<b>Vinicius Dasilva</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Sara Higgins</b> Barnstable High School	<b>Peter Prygocki</b> Sturgis Charter Public School East	<b>Abbygail Yeomans</b> Cape Cod Academy
<b>Britania Davis</b> Falmouth High School			<b>Chuhan (Circle) Yuan</b> Saint John Paul II High School



# Congratulations to all the **Rising Stars** among us!

**Cape Cod Community College  
is very proud to congratulate and  
help showcase the rising stars  
among us. Each shines brightly today,  
and we wish them a bright future.**

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