

**CONTACT:**

Tiffany Thomason, Public Relations Coordinator
tthomason@foundationhoc.org
315-731-3726

For Immediate Release

August 6, 2026

Connor Arthur Lynskey Memorial Scholarship Fund Announces 2026 Recipients

UTICA, NY – The Connor Arthur Lynskey Memorial Scholarship Fund at the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties announced this year's recipients of awards to graduating seniors from high schools within the two counties.

The scholarships were based on academic and leadership qualities, with preference given to those entering a medical profession, as well as those with athletic abilities and strength in character. Twenty-four students graduating from 13 high schools plan to attend a wide range of colleges and universities.

Connor Arthur Lynskey Memorial Academic Award for Oneida/Herkimer Counties

- Alizay Meerub Bilal, Whitesboro High School, Lafayette College
- Amira Abdelshafia, Thomas R. Proctor High School, University at Buffalo
- Ellie Secor, Remsen Senior High School, University at Albany
- Isabelle Seamon, Richfield Springs Central School, Mohawk Valley Community College
- Lillian Bladek, Dolgeville High School, Amherst College
- Luke Jadhon, New Hartford Senior High School, Boston College
- Neeva Enigk, Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Senior High School, Elmira College

Connor Arthur Lynskey Memorial Athletic/Character Award for Oneida/Herkimer Counties

- Allison Denton, Mount Markham Senior High School, Mohawk Valley Community College
- Alyssa Capuana, Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School, St. Bonaventure University
- Caitlyn Armendola, Town of Webb Union Free School District, Mohawk Valley Community College
- Chayse Fischer, Whitesboro High School, Daemen University
- Evan Kocienda, Mount Markham Senior High School, SUNY Polytechnic Institute
- Keelyn Simpson, Thomas R. Proctor High School, SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry
- Marialaina Cooney, Rome Free Academy, Nazareth University

**CONTACT:**

Tiffany Thomason, Public Relations Coordinator
tthomason@foundationhoc.org
315-731-3726

Joey R. Ventura Tradesman Award

- Cooper Karram, West Canada Valley Senior High School, Mohawk Valley Community College

Connor Arthur Lyskey Memorial Academic Award for Holland Patent Central School District

- Addison Snider, SUNY Morrisville
- Annabella Schrader, Utica University
- Claire Favata, Nazareth University
- Nevaeh Lohnes, Mohawk Valley Community College
- Teagyn Jones, Rochester Institute of Technology

Connor Arthur Lyskey Memorial Athletic/Character Award for Holland Patent Central School District

- Faith Zylinsky, SUNY Plattsburgh
- Gideon Keawpinna, Mohawk Valley Community College
- Kaiden Whaley, Paul Smiths College
- Madeline Snider, SUNY Cobleskill

The scholarship fund was established in memory of Connor, a 2017 Holland Patent Central School District graduate and pre-med student whose life was tragically taken by a drunk driver on August 11, 2018. The scholarship fund aims to keep his memory alive and help medical and high school students to further their education. In 2022, the “Joey R. Ventura Tradesman Award” was added in memory of Joey, who was an accomplished local welding instructor who passed away unexpectedly in 2021.

Since the fund’s creation in 2018, it has awarded over \$92,000 to students enrolled in colleges, universities, and certificate programs, as well as additional awards to students enrolled in the Upstate College of Medicine Early Assurance Program, with an emphasis on assisting students in the Rural Medical Doctor program. Connor was enrolled in this Upstate program and planned to become a rural doctor. In 2022, the scholarship fund partnered with the Community Foundation to grant the high school awards in his honor.

“As a family, our goal is to keep Connor’s memory alive for years to come through these memorial awards,” explained Connor’s uncle, Don Lyskey. “The mission of ‘Connor’s Way’ is to financially assist students with values and characteristics similar to Connor’s through these scholarships. We are striving to raise the funds to establish long-term endowments at

**CONTACT:**

Tiffany Thomason, Public Relations Coordinator
tthomason@foundationhoc.org
315-731-3726

both the Community Foundation and at Upstate Medical University to continue these memorial award programs in perpetuity."

The scholarship program is funded by the annual Connor's Way 5-Mile Scenic Memorial Run/Walk in Hinckley, which follows the route that Connor routinely ran. The 9th annual Run/Walk will take place on Sunday, September 20, 2026. Participants that register by September 4, will receive a t-shirt included in the cost of registration. This year's event will also include a free Kids' Half Mile Fun Run, sponsored by Bruce F. Daniels, P.C. Registration and sponsorship details are available at connorsway.com.

"Connor's Way is a unique 5-mile run and walk in the foothills of the Adirondacks that features beautiful, wooded terrain on the course that Connor loved to run," said Lynskey. "We are proud to continue this annual event in memory of him."

For more information on the Connor Arthur Lynskey Memorial Scholarship Fund, visit foundationhoc.org/connor.



Connor Arthur Lynskey, 1999-2018

###

Founded in 1952, the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties envisions a vibrant region with opportunity for all. In fulfillment of its "Engage. Invest. Lead" mission, the Community Foundation has transformed decades of donor generosity into \$150 million invested in social impact initiatives, collaborative leadership and grantmaking. Find out more at foundationhoc.org.