



**LONG ISLAND JUNIOR
SOCCER LEAGUE**

SCHOLARSHIP

JULY 23, 2023





ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

We are privileged to present these 27 awards to some of the finest student athletes in LIJSL. Many of these awards are in memorial of individuals who viewed soccer as not only a passion, but a way of life.

We are proud of the corporate and foundation support along with our League that enables LIJSL to expand these awards.

The contributions made by individuals and organizations enable LIJSL to provide these scholarship awards, which honor these exceptional young adults.

LIJSL Scholarship Recipients, never forget that you have overcome challenges in the past by being innovators and never quitting. Please surround yourself with positive influences and continue to be the positive influence that has led you to this moment. One mistake can change all of that. You are all exceptional in your own right.

“You could not prevent a thunderstorm, but you could use the electricity; you could not direct the wind, but you could trim your sail so as to propel your vessel as you pleased, no matter which way the wind blew.” - Cora L. V. Hatch



AWARDS RECIPIENTS

AWARD

LIJSL TOPSoccer Scholarship
George Hoffman Memorial TOPSoccer Scholarship
George Hoffman Memorial TOPSoccer Scholarship
Addie Mattei-Iaia Presidential Scholarship
Bill Peet Memorial Scholarship
Brittney Walsh Memorial Fund Scholarship
Brittney Walsh Memorial Fund Scholarship
Carolyn Page Memorial Scholarship
Frank & Michael Vertullo Foundation Scholarship
Frank & Michael Vertullo Foundation Scholarship
Frank Gorman Memorial Scholarship
Jerry & Sally Marinan Memorial Scholarship
John Pinezich Memorial Scholarship
Joseph Lombardo Memorial Scholarship
LIJSL Merit Scholarship
LIJSL Merit Scholarship
Marc Stein Memorial Scholarship
Michael Scarpati Memorial Goalkeeper Scholarship
Michael Secko Memorial Scholarship
Miles for Matt Foundation Scholarship
Pat Grecco Scholarship
Peter C. Collins Memorial Presidential Scholarship
Robinson-Monses Scholarship
Rocco Amoroso Memorial Sportsmanship Scholarship
Sandra Atlas Bass Scholarship
Sean Urda Memorial Scholarship
Tania Bonilla Memorial Scholarship

RECIPIENT

Isabella Pepe
Juliana Edwards
Sophia Mania
Christopher Simon
Finnegan Corcoran-Doolin
Natalia Lutz
Riley Schroeder
Jessica Fackler
Jonas Mata
Nicholas Neri
Efsthios Spathis
Nicholas Mrakovcic
Christopher Pena
Michael Glueck
Jack Lamberg
Taylor Weber
Michael Fallon
Sal Meloni
Ava Matlin
Jasmine Roldan
Jacob Raphan
Nicholas Piombino
Jack Young
Sean Browne
Fiona Schlegel
Gabriel Alcaraz
Juliana Ayala



LIJSL & GEORGE HOFFMAN TOPSOCCER SCHOLARSHIP



The Outreach Program for Soccer (TOPSoccer) is a community-based program to give children and young adults with physical and/or intellectual disabilities the chance to step on the field. The program has been running through LIJSL for over 40 years.

Much like the mainstream LIJSL season, players participate in the spring and fall. There are several tournaments hosted by LIJSL member clubs and the year culminates with the TOPSoccer BBQ at the Peter C. Collins Soccer Park in Plainview, where every player receives an award for their participation in the program. The start of the TOPSoccer program dates back to 1979 when Mike Ludin's son, Craig, ran out on the field during one of his brother's game.

After that moment, Ludin wanted to find a regular place for Craig, who has Downs Syndrome, as well as other kids with disabilities to play. The TOPSoccer program has grown since, evolving into a program with tremendous support from member clubs.

George Hoffman, a Long Island Junior Soccer League Hall of Fame member, served on the Long Island Junior Soccer League Board of Directors for decades before his untimely passing in 1997. George was much of the creative force behind the Long Island Junior Soccer League newspaper "Kick Off" and his Bits'n Pieces column could be controversial but it always made you think.

George was active supporter of the TOPSoccer Program and LIJSL sponsors two scholarships to youth volunteers in his memory.



RECIPIENT ISABELLA PEPE



Isabella Pepe has spent the last seven years with East Islip's TOPSoccer program. According to her coach she is one of the most patient and caring instructors he knows. She has the patience that you do not see in most adults and/or special-needs professionals. She is the first one to show up to set up and the last to leave. She has been the voice for the athletes by informing students in the school about the program and recruiting them to help as instructors. Pepe goes above and beyond to show the players that they belong even when they are off the field. She makes them feel special by acknowledging them.

Pepe is a member of the National Art Honor Society, Honors Choir, and Honor and High Honor Rolls. She is VP of Student Council, President of East Islip HS Acapella Group, and cast member/stage crew of school musicals. She also played travel soccer and refereed.

Along with TOPSoccer, Pepe helped East Islip Soccer Club with field day and tournaments. She volunteered with local non-profits such as For the Kids Foundation and EJ Autism Foundation, helped at the four-mile race/walk, the Black Tie Hoodie and other events. She also donates her time to Taylor's Hope and is a buddy with the East Islip school districts SEPTA program.

When she started working with TOPSoccer, she got involved with a boy named William who could not speak. She says that since he could not talk much, she did the talking for both of them. After many months they finally had a breakthrough and connection. She learned to understand his body language which he used to communicate. He became more comfortable around her and she realized that they both taught each other something. Their journey was difficult, yet it helped her grow as a person and made her realize the importance of compassion and the power of listening to others. The rewarding and fulfilling experience she had with William changed her life and sparked her interest in pursuing a career in clinical psychology. He showed her that by using her voice and by listening she could find different ways for people to communicate.

She is attending George Washington University with a major in behavioral psychology.



RECIPIENT JULIANA EDWARDS



Juliana Edwards has volunteered with Commack TOPSoccer for five years. She was very helpful at the Commack Festival, setting up and staying late to clean up. The coach says she is devoted to the players and the program and is truly missed by all when she is not there. She is kind, responsible, respectful, enthusiastic, patient, and understanding. These are all qualities we look for in our student volunteers. It is said that she is one-of-a-kind, independent, sensitive, but strong and has incredible leadership qualities.

Edwards is a member of the National, Math, Science, English, and Spanish Honor Societies as well as Girls Scholar Athlete Leadership Club. She received awards in Sportsmanship, Faculty Award, Math and Science Achievements and Soccer Academic All-County.

Besides TOPSoccer, she volunteered at the Leukemia Lymphoma Society, raised money for breast cancer awareness, and donated and organized toy collections for Toys for Tots Drive. She helped set up and run Halloween Happenings, collected and donated baskets of food at Thanksgiving, and organized baskets for the Christmas Gift Collection. She assisted with set up and cleaning up at the Community Senior Citizens Dance and WAC Fair Science competition. She led incoming freshman tours for Freshman Orientation, helped the eighth grade graduation ceremony, and created cards for a variety of events including get-well cards for kids who had surgery.

Edwards views TOPSoccer as a commitment for an hour a week helping others and an opportunity to learn, experience, and develop as an individual. As a volunteer you must be there for the right reason to seize those opportunities. The first day she stepped on the field she got the sense she was meant to be there for the participants and herself. Normally she is a very orderly person but TOPSoccer is anything but. The unpredictability provided her with the opportunity to become more adaptable. While acting as the volunteer, she viewed herself as an equal to the participants. She aided the kids to play soccer, but they provided her with a new perspective and the program challenged her to grow more open-minded to the people around her.

She is confirming her passion to teach by seeking a degree in elementary and special education at the University of Delaware.



RECIPIENT SOPHIA MANIA



Sophia Mania has been among the volunteers of Rockville Centre's TOPSoccer program for the past five years. In that time, she was known to be a deeply caring and outstanding person. She has one of the highest attendance ratings. The coach remarks that she is one of the volunteers he looks to when they have a new player, a young player, or one who likes to run around more than play. Mania has a special way of speaking with each of these players, getting them to listen, and relating to her as she slowly but surely brings them into the session. She is always smiling even after a hard hour of practice. She guided the younger volunteers and helped them become familiar with how things work and enjoyed the program as much as the players.

Mania was a member of the NYS Science, Art, Math, Spanish and National Honor Societies. She was a member of the SADD Club, Cancer Awareness Club, Habitat for Humanity Club, and the Artistic Director of School Plays. She also assisted special-needs students with art-based classes, yoga classes, and theater classes. She worked as an assistant for science classes, helping teachers plan projects and experiments. Mania tutors young students to understand math concepts as well as Spanish vocabulary and grammar. She also plays local travel soccer.

In her essay, she noted her involvement in TOPSoccer started because her cousin was diagnosed with autism at a young age. When she started it was not for the hours, or for the other volunteers, it was simply because she wanted to teach other kids how to play soccer. It became important to her and taught her more life lessons than she could count. After missing a practice and being told by a difficult player that he missed her, she realized that it was not what she was doing that mostly mattered but just being present. Interacting with a new child every week has made her more open, extraverted and less shy. It has also opened her eyes to volunteering with other organizations and always thinks back to how one hour a week changed her life and the way she sees the world.

In the fall, Mania will be on her way to Boston to attend Tufts University.



ADDIE MATTEI-IAIA PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP



In 29 years of dedicating herself to youth soccer on Long Island, Addie Mattei-Iaia touched nearly every aspect of the game. It started in Smithtown, where she continued to coach and then helped co-found the Smithtown Soccer Club. Later, she created, organized, and ran the Smithtown International Tournament that brought teams from around the world to Long Island.

Soon she was volunteering at the league level, where amongst many other things, she served for 25 years as the chairperson of the LIJSL Convention. Mattei-Iaia served on the LIJSL Board of Directors for 18 years, and in 2004 she succeeded Peter Collins as President of the League. She also served as a Vice President on the Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association Board of directors.

In ten years under her watch, the league's enrollment grew annually, and she increased sponsorships and revenues to support league programs like the TOPSoccer, Scholarship, and Player Development Programs as well as many more. Mattei-Iaia also spearheaded an agreement with the New York Red Bulls that allowed the LIJSL's top players to take part in the MLS club's Regional Developmental School. She also made improvements to the Peter C. Collins Soccer Park in Plainview, making it one of the finest soccer-only facilities in the region, provided support to families and soccer communities in need after 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, and secured a new office facility for the league.

She has been recognized as an ENYYSA and LIJSL Hall of Fame inductee, and in 2007 she was honored as the USYSA Region I Administrator of the Year.



RECIPIENT CHRISTOPHER SIMON



Christopher Simon is a 2023 graduate of Eastport South Manor High School and was a two-year varsity soccer player as well as a member of the spring track team for three years. He played club soccer for the Manorville Soccer Club with the Dragons, which was the same team for his entire travel experience in LIJSL.

One thing about Simon that makes him a fine young man is that he is always looking for ways to help others. Wanting to help youth soccer in underserved communities, he has spent the past four years, with the help of the Manorville Soccer Club and also with LIJSL, to send uniforms, t-shirts, cleats, soccer balls, and pumps to Tanzania. He said, "Hearing the cheering and laughing with glee as they played with the donations I sent over was a memory I will never forget. The overwhelming feeling of the difference I could make with my community's assistance was ineffable."

This sense of kindness was echoed by Christine Starr, President and former Board Member of the Manorville Soccer Club. She said, "Christopher came to me two years ago and asked if he, along with one other volunteer, could organize a drive to collect soccer balls and gently-used cleats. His goal was to provide children enough uniforms to field a soccer team. Not only did his efforts create this team, but more importantly he created hope for these children."

In the classroom, Simon is an excellent student as he had a 93 GPA and was on the Principal Honor Roll all four years in high school. Other awards he received in academics included being a member of the National Honor, World Language, and English Honor Societies, and being an AP Scholar

Coach Mike Thorley said, "I have been lucky to coach Chris, and not just because of the efforts that he puts forth on the soccer field, but also, for his quality of character. A complete young man who has a very bright future ahead of him."

Simon will be attending Auburn University this upcoming fall.

In his own words:

"Ever since I was three, I have been kicking a soccer ball around. It's always been a significant part of my life and taught me so many valuable lessons. Although I won't be continuing this journey as I advance in college, I will be forever thankful for soccer and the impact the game has had on me. Additionally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the individuals who blessed me with this scholarship. If it wasn't for LIJSL, I wouldn't have found the love for soccer that I have. Because of this, it made this scholarship mean so much more to me."



BILL PEET MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



William S. Peet III known as Bill began his volunteer work in youth soccer with the Brentwood Soccer Club in the early 1960s coaching his twin sons. He later served in many different capacities with the club from coach to treasurer to president.

Peet was elected to the Long Island Junior Soccer League Board of Directors in the early 70s and served as the league treasurer for decades. Under his financial guidance, LIJSL became financially secure and was able to purchase the building where the offices are now. Peet also served as the Chairman of the LIJSL Appeals Committee and was an advisor to ENY Soccer. In 1999, he was inducted into the LIJSL Hall of Fame.

Bill is survived by his wife Maryanne, twin sons Bill and Michael, and his daughter Karen.



RECIPIENT FINNEGAN CORCORAN-DOOLIN



Finnegan Corcoran-Doolin is a 2023 graduate of W.C. Mepham High School and played soccer for the varsity program for the past two years. On the club level, Finnegan played for the Bellmore PAL Soccer program with the Bellmore United.

He is a young man that is always looking to give back to his club, and, when he had the time, would volunteer his services to being a referee for the intramural program on Sunday's, when his own club games did not conflict. He'd run to the field to ref a game right after his own game was over just a few minutes prior. When he is with his club team, Corcoran-Doolin is always the first to practice and the last to leave. He is always looking to improve his game to help his team. As Coach Doug Walter said, "He is so passionate about this sport and his life is all about the beautiful game of soccer. His next steps are he is majoring in Sports Broadcasting and Management, so look out for him at the next World Cup as he could be one of the announcers, because he "never gives up".

In his essay, Corcoran-Doolin spoke about how his dad has been an inspiration to him. His father had stage-four throat cancer and beat it, while still coaching the Bellmore United. He said, "In life never give up and you will always win. More importantly, always keep going even if you're the team of boys that didn't have any coaches who believed in them. Look for the light and find that in a coach like my dad who said 'I don't care how big or small you are, or good or bad, I care about if you love the game and are willing to commit,' and you might just find a bunch of boys who are family."

Corcoran-Doolin will continue his studies at Marist College in the fall with a focus on sports broadcasting and journalism.

In his own words:

"I am a sports fanatic who loves both playing and watching soccer the most out of any sport. I made the decision to attend a different high school in my district than I was zoned for back in 8th grade to pursue sports broadcasting. Over my four years in high school, I worked my way up to become the Sports Director of Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting (BMB), a tough feat considering I stayed home in 'remote school' for an extra year during the pandemic to keep my dad safe who fought and beat cancer. Upon returning, I spent much of my junior and senior years calling the games for almost every sport at Mepham for BMB, but since I was a varsity soccer team member I never called a soccer game because I was always playing."



BRITTNEY WALSH MEMORIAL FUND SCHOLARSHIP



Brittney Walsh was a proud graduate of the class of 2012 from the Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School. This is where she would challenge herself and her friends to make everything she was involved with just a little bit better. Being ranked number 22 in her class, captain of her winter track team, and three-year captain on the girls varsity soccer team, she was often the one to follow. Her passion for track came when she lost a close friend in the 10th grade due to a brain aneurysm. She made a promise to her friends that she would continue running for him. Making the spring track team in 11th grade she quickly pranced her way to Penn Relays where they placed third in the 4x4 (never done in Copiague). Her track coach and fellow runners would comment on her constant talking when running. "How could she do that?"

Walsh's longtime passion was for soccer. She started at the age of five and played for Lindenhurst early on and finished her club career in Massapequa.

One of her dreams was to go to college. She was accepted to York College of Pennsylvania where she planned to study sports management, run track, and play soccer. But her dream was cut short.

On June 24, 2012, she was killed by a drunk driver, just two days after her high school graduation. She was coming home from her summer job. Her loss shook the community island wide.

To tell you what kind of person she was, her yearbook quote read:

"Be a Fruit Loop in a World of Cheerios."



RECIPIENT NATALIA LUTZ



Natalia Lutz graduated in 2023 from Babylon Junior-Senior High School and was a member of the varsity program for the past two years. For the past six years, she's played for the Massapequa Soccer Club as a member of the Flash. Previously, she played for the Babylon Soccer Club.

With the Flash, Lutz earned the respect of Coach Ben Lamb, who said, "In addition to being a huge asset to her team, Natalia leads by example, especially with our younger players. She is constantly encouraging them, and often provides advice on and off the field, especially to players playing her position. It is because of these qualities that she has achieved so much in the few short years that she has been with the Massapequa Soccer Club."

He went on to state that she is their number one scoring option on the field, scoring more than 80 percent of the team goals throughout the years.

In the classroom, Lutz had a 96.2 GPA and always challenges herself to be the best with academics. Her business teacher Claire Reilly said, "Her academic and leadership assets are exemplary. Natalia Lutz is a honest and caring student, full of compassion and integrity. She is a student that strives for perfection." Also, other achievements that she received in high school were, being in the National, Business, and Social Studies Honor Societies, and being a member of the DECA Club.

Lutz will be attending Oneonta State University where she will be a member of the women's soccer program.

In her own words:

"I've been playing soccer for as long as I can remember. This sport has not only taught me how to work with others on a team, but it's taught me how to have drive and determination on and off the field. I'm so grateful to have played on teams with amazing groups of girls and I can't wait to continue to play in college."



RECIPIENT RILEY SCHROEDER



Riley Schroeder is a 2023 graduate of Kellenberg Memorial High School. She played club soccer a member of the Hicksville American Soccer Club with the Kickers/Lightning team, which she was a member of since the third grade. She participated in the Long Island Player Developmental Program from 2015 to 2019.

The one thing that makes Schroeder an exceptional soccer player is that she would face any challenge that would come her way. For two years on her club team, they did not have a full-time goalkeeper. For any team, this is a major problem, but she would step up and volunteer when no one would. As Coach Michael Longo said, "Before every game I would ask the same question, if someone would play goal today. Everyone's head would immediately turn away in every different direction. Even though I knew Riley didn't want to play the position, she would always raise her hand and say she would jump in, showing that she always wanted what was best for the team; since no one else ever stepped up, she would, every time."

As a student, her infectious enthusiasm and positivity rubs off onto her classmates, and she is a role model to her younger classmates as she was chosen her senior year to serve as an underclassmen mentor. Also, she was a member of the National Honor Society and on the honor roll all throughout her four years at Kellenberg.

Schroeder will be attending Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina.

In her own words:

"Something people my not know about me is that I work in a children's day camp over the summer which steered me into majoring in elementary education."



Thank you

To all the families that graciously donated to the scholarship program in memory of their loved ones.

To our sponsors for their generosity year in and year out.

To the scholarship committee who dedicate their time to review each and every application from so many wonderful student athletes.

To all our league volunteers for your dedication.

To each and everyone of you who believe in our youth and realize that they are the future. We believe the recipients we honor today prove that the future is in good hands.

Special thanks

Lynn Scarpati for all of the hardwork and dedication over the years. Your commitment to the scholarship program has left an indelible impact.

We wish you nothing but the best as you step back from your role as Scholarship Committee Chairperson.





CAROLYN PAGE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Carolyn Page of the Massapequa Soccer Club left behind a tremendous legacy. Page passed away after a fourteen-year battle with cancer, but she remains in the hearts of her husband Lincoln Page and her three daughters, Lorraine, Cynthia, and Pamela as well as all who knew her.

Page began coaching her daughter when she was told, "If you don't coach, there will be no team for your daughter to play on." She coached for the Massapequa intramural program and later in the travel team program. She was involved with the Massapequa Memorial Day Tournament, specifically taking care of the trophy presentations.

She later became an administrator for Girls Select and was a chaperone for the distant tournaments and overall was totally supportive of her husband and daughters, and took on any job necessary to help.

Lincoln mentioned that he could not have gone on to be President of Massapequa Soccer Club, Tournament Director, State Cup Commissioner, LIJSL Arbitration Board Chairman, only to name a few jobs he held, without the support of Carolyn. In fact, she used to say in jest, "I did all the work and he took all the glory."

She will always be remembered as a true soccer mom/wife and consummate volunteer.



RECIPIENT JESSICA FACKLER



Jessica Fackler is a 2023 graduate of Massapequa High School and was on the varsity squad for the past two years, earning the school's Scholar Athlete Award in 2022. She played soccer for the Massapequa Soccer Club and spent her entire youth travel soccer experience with the Flash, starting back in 2015.

On the soccer field, she was well respected by all of her coaches that had the opportunity to coach her. Massapequa High School Coach Ron Forman Jr. said, "Jess strives for her personal best and rarely shows signs of an individual who lacks confidence in oneself. Jess' desire, dedication, enthusiasm, and determination have been inspirational to her fellow teammates."

These comments are quite similar to what Fackler wrote in her essay to the committee, saying, " I entered my first year on varsity soccer during my junior year of high school and the team was filled with seniors, most of which were committed to college to play high-level soccer. Through not only their actions on the field, but outside of practices and games, I learned what a true leader and team member looks like."

In the classroom, Fackler is an exceptional student with a GPA of 101.2 She was the National Honor Society President for 2022-2023 for Massapequa High School. She was also an active participant in the Robotics Club, Science Olympiad, and Mathletes programs. Her guidance counselor Marianne McCormick said, "Jessica's mind seems to blend the creative and analytical in a way I have never seen before. She is truly a remarkable person who is bound for limitless success."

Jessica will be attending Syracuse University in the fall.

In her own words:

"While not only playing soccer and softball over the past 15 years, I also enjoy baseball and hockey and thus look to enter a career in sports analytics. I've learned that you do not need to be on the field in order to connect with others through the game as the sport community has allowed me to meet not only other players, but fans that I may not have met outside the game. Many bonds and close relationships I've formed over the years have been due to the shared interest of the following sports and certain teams, not so much playing the game itself. A career in this field would allow me to keep sports integrated in my everyday life and interact with many more people from all over."

FRANK & MICHAEL VERTULLO FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



The Frank & Michael Vertullo Foundation awards a scholarship to two student that participated in the Long Island Soccer League that has either...

- 1) Personally supported or currently participate in a program(s) that help enrich the lives of people living with special needs or
- 2) Personally have mentored a person living with special needs to help them overcome their challenges and achieve personal successes.

It is our honor to help make your dreams come true.



RECIPIENT JONAS MATA



Jonas Mata is a 2023 graduate of Valley Stream Central High School and played four years on varsity. He was the goalkeeper for his first three years before playing both 'keeper and defense for his senior season as team captain. He earned All-Conference in 2022. For club, Mata played for the Valley Stream Soccer Club with Alpha United.

On the soccer field, Mata is a player that any team would want on their squad, leading by example as the captain. Coach Deven Madray said, "Throughout the years, I have watched Jonas grow and develop into one of our top players for our club. Jonas is currently our team captain and has had this title for many years. He's used his opportunities to lead, mentor, and teach many of his team members, even players with average skills and abilities."

Also he has volunteered as a buddy in the Valley Stream Soccer Club TOPSoccer Program. In 2016, for his hard work in the program, he was awarded the Outstanding TOPSoccer Buddy Award. Azzedine Layachi, who is the TOPSoccer Coordinator for Valley Stream, said, "Jonas has given us tremendous assistance throughout the years, and I am personally very grateful for his long commitment, and his enthusiastic willingness to serve as a buddy to our young special needs children."

In the classroom, Mata loves to learn, especially in the area of science. His physics teacher Robert Hildebrand said, He is one of the top students I have had the pleasure of working with in my teaching career. Jonas' intellectual curiosity, great character, and relentless work ethic allow him to hold a high level of achievement."

He will be attending Queens College in the fall.



RECIPIENT NICOLAS NERI



Nicholas Neri is a 2023 graduate of East Islip High School and was a member of the varsity soccer program for the past two seasons. Neri competes in the LIJSL for the Deer Park Soccer Club with the Alliance. Also, Nicholas has been a huge part of the Just for Kicks Soccer Program for the East Islip Soccer Club since 2018 and has been a senior instructor since 2021.

With Just for Kicks, he has been a person that the club could count on as well as the young boys and girls that would work with him on Friday evenings each week throughout the season. Due to his work ethic and ability to work with young players, he is one of the most requested instructors in the program's history, which led him to learn how to become a Senior Instructor for the program at Stony Brook University. Neri has been involved with Just For Kicks for the past six years, starting to volunteer when he was just 12 years old. Just for Kicks and East Islip Soccer Club Board Member Patricia M. Graydon said, "Nick was one of our most responsible, conscientious employees I have ever had the pleasure of working with. He is strong, decisive, and a model for younger players looking to him for guidance." Sonia Kelly from LIJSL said, "I have witnessed Nicholas Neri conquering challenge after challenge, welcoming each experience as a chance to grow and learn, and emerging as the rarest and most motivated of teenagers being resourceful and responsible well beyond his years."

On the soccer field, these qualities have been seen with the Alliance. When he is playing, Neri has the respect from his teammates, fellow opponents, and the coaching staff. He has a dedication to the game and the willingness to learn that makes him a leader. Coach Tiziano Carcone said, "Over the years, Nick developed excellent leadership skills that guided his teams to many successful accomplishments. Nick is the type of individual that leads by example. His peers choose to follow and listen to him. Mr. Neri excels on the field, as well as off the field."

Neri will be attending the University of Buffalo.

In his own words:

"I am grateful to be chosen as the recipient of The Frank and Michael Vertullo Foundation Scholarship this year. I will be attending the University of Buffalo in the fall, majoring in mechanical engineering. Soccer has been my life since I have been five years old. I am grateful for the lifelong friends I made along the way. I am hoping to play on the school's club team."



Building Character Through Soccer
Since 1966



FRANK GORMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



According to Newsday's article, "Everybody Loved Him", Frank Gorman was a Brentwood resident for 26 years who had recently moved to Farmingville. He was hit by a car and died on January 5, 2003. Those who knew Frank said he didn't merely strive for perfection, he achieved it. The former Brentwood High School track and soccer star ran more than a thousand miles a year to keep in peak condition.

He was an All-American in the 3200 meter run after earning third place in a 1994 national competition while attending Brentwood High School. Gorman began playing soccer at 3 ½ years old in Brentwood where he later served as a referee, assistant soccer coach, and trainer of youth teams. He later played for Hofstra University where he was known as "Stormin' Gorman." He graduated from college in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. After graduation, Frank divided his time between a job at his mom's All-State Insurance office in Bay Shore, coaching junior varsity at his high school alma mater, and playing soccer. Frank also worked with Adelante, where he enjoyed being able to talk to the kids one-on-one about their future plans. A tribute to Gorman given by Hofstra University soccer coach Richard Nutall said, "Frank had a fantastic ability to bring people together. He was more instrumental than anyone in bringing the men's soccer squad together as one. He was a major catalyst for team harmony, the "foreigners" and the "Americans" were made to mix by his constant Gorman social diplomacy.

"We always thought of him as "Little Frank" to distinguish the difference between his Dad, "Big Frank" but "Little Frank" wasn't small, but just how grand was he?" The answer to the question of how grand was "Little Frank" is easy, his impact remains massive in our hearts and minds forever.



RECIPIENT EFSTATHIOS SPATHIS



Efstathios Spathis is a 2023 graduate of Bethpage High School and played varsity soccer all four years. He was a three-year starter and was named All-Conference in his junior and senior years. He played club soccer for the Hicksville American Soccer Club with the Surge.

Spathis was an excellent player, leading his team to the playoffs three out of four years. One of the key members on the squad, he was always looking for ways to improve his game. Coach Daniel Kramer recommended joining the track team in the offseason to improve his speed. The next day, there Spathis was joining track team, focusing on long-distance races, to become better on the soccer field. Coach Kramer said, "Without hesitation, Efstathios joined track, and in effect, improved on the soccer field as a result of pushing himself on the track team."

As much as Spathis excelled as a soccer player, he did so in the classroom. With a 93 GPA, he earned honors in Spanish and Statistics and is receiving a Regents Diploma with Honors. He was also a member of SADD and GOYA (Greek American Youth Association). As his science teacher Kelly Flanagan said, "Throughout class, Efstathios, always surprises me with his ability to remain diligent and focused on his studies despite his numerous other commitments, including bussing tables at a local restaurant and working at the family business. His commitment to academics allowed him to strengthen his inquiry and problem-solving skills which will benefit him as he purses his future endeavors."

With the Surge, he was an important member of the squad, leading the team to the LI Cup semifinals in 2022 and winning the final of the U-19 Platinum bracket in 2023 as well as a second-place finish in the U-19 Premier Division in LIJSL. As he said in his essay, "You try for something, work hard, and you will get it at some point. I did not do all these things for myself though. I did it to make my parents proud and hopefully have a future in the sport."

Spathis will attend St. Joseph's University in Patchogue in the fall and will also be a member of the men's soccer team.

In his own words:

"I will be attending St. Joseph's University in Patchogue. I am pursuing accounting at school while also playing on the soccer team. I hope to win both in the classroom and on the field."

JERRY & SALLY MARINAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Jerry and Sally Marinan were members of the Levittown Soccer Club for over 35 years. After a short but hard battle with cancer, Jerry passed away in July 2016. Sally continued to volunteer for the club at various events including Opening Day and fundraisers and sadly passed away in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his years, Jerry held many positions including Coach, Travel Director, Social Activities Director, and President. He was also very involved with LIJSL serving as a Supervisor, Coordinator for the league and the LI Cup, and was a member of the Registration Committee and Games Committee. In 2004, Jerry was inducted into the LIJSL Hall of Fame, an honor he was extremely proud and humbled by.

Sally was also very involved with Levittown SC. She was an intramural and travel coach and would always volunteer at the annual picnic, help with registration, and checked players in at our holiday parties. She too served as a Supervisor and Coordinator for LIJSL league play and the LI Cup.

Both Sally and Jerry continued to stay very involved with Levittown SC even after both of their daughters moved on to other clubs. They always maintained true fairness and caring for all players, coaches, and volunteers till the end. It is with great pleasure that we honor them with this scholarship in their name. We know they are always watching over all of our players including his grandchildren who play up in Westchester. We want to wish everyone the best of luck as they enter a new phase of their lives.

May you continue to always reach your "GOALS!"

-The Marinan Family



RECIPIENT NICHOLAS MRAKOVVIC



Nicholas Mrakovcic is a 2023 graduate of Kellenberg Memorial High School. During his LIJSL youth career, Nicholas played with the Floral Park Soccer Club, with the last four years as a member of the Warriors, and previously played with the Franklin Square Raiders Soccer Club.

While with the Warriors , Mrakovcic has been an integral part of the team since the day he joined. He took it upon himself after his first year with the team to convert to goalkeeper after the team was having issues with the position. He took the time that summer to train as 'keeper and solidify the position. Coach Liam Guilfoyle said, "Nick put the time and effort in and brought his level of play up to a standard that many goalies wish they could reach. The pressure of being the goalie is not for everyone, and Nick took it on without a moment's hesitation. I would be lucky if I had an entire team of kids with his qualities."

In his essay, Mrakovcic said about converting to goalkeeper, "When I first started playing goalie, I assumed it would be an easy task. No running, and I get to sit in the net all game; that sounded like a deal to me. After many grueling games and beating myself up after a blunder, I can tell you it wasn't easy. Playing goalie requires a unique set of skills, mentality, and character traits that have helped shape me into the person I am today."

In the classroom Brother Michael Gillen defined Mrakovcic in one word: Passion. He said that passion is this young man's key of life. The list of community service done while at Kellenberg is remarkable, having been a member of SALT (Service Allegiance Leadership Teamwork), Marianist Mentor, PREP (Parish Religious Education Program), and CROSS (Christians Reaching Out Sending Spirituality).

He will attending the University of South Carolina.



JOHN PINEZICH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



John Pinezich was born in Astoria, Queens in 1933 to immigrants from what is now Croatia. He was a graduate of Brooklyn Technical High School in 1951 and was awarded a scholarship to Pennsylvania State University where he played on the varsity soccer team for four years. As a freshman, he was part of the first U.S. diplomatic mission to Iran as the youngest member of the Penn State Soccer team. They played a series of goodwill games with Iranian teams throughout the country. In 1954, he captained the NCAA Championship team for Penn State and received First Team All-American honors. He was a member of the U.S. National Team in 1955, and had one cap in a game against Iceland. He also traveled the world as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces soccer team.

Throughout his youth, beginning in the early 1940s, he played soccer for Eintracht Soccer Club in the former German-American League. His team won the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup in 1955, the highest achievement in soccer at the time. He scored two goals in the last six minutes to lead his team to a 2-0 win in the championship game against the Los Angeles Danes (one with his left foot and one with his right, as he liked to point out.)

In 1958, he met the love of his life, Evelyn Reis, and they were married for almost fifty years. They moved to Northport, Long Island in 1962, and raised three children, John, Lyn, and Karin, all of whom played soccer. His love for the game led him, in 1971, to help found the Northport Soccer Club. He spent the first five years as Club President and remained on the Board of Directors for many years. He was actively involved in coaching teams for Northport and the Long Island Junior Soccer League for almost 30 seasons, even after his children were no longer playing. He coached the Long Island Region gold-medal-winning Scholastic Girls teams for the Empire State Games in 1983 and 1984, and the Open Women's team to a gold medal in 1982. He was also a USSF Region 1 Girls Select Staff Coach in 1983 and coached the LIJSL Boys Select in 1975-76.

He passed away in 2008 at his winter home in Stuart, Florida of a stroke. He lived a very full life pursuing his endless interests: soccer, landscaping and bonsai, history, sailing, airplanes, architecture, design, travel, his Croatian community, and his wonderful extended family. Throughout his life, he touched us all with his strength, modesty, dignity, curiosity, and passion. His openness of emotion, love, and generosity embraced us all. We are honored to establish this memorial fund in his memory.

RECIPIENT CHRISTOPHER PENA



Christopher Pena is a 2023 graduate of Oceanside High School and has been a member of the varsity squad as a central midfielder/defender since 2020. He played his club soccer for the Oceanside United Soccer Club and most recently with the Fury. In the past, he also played for the Vortex (2016-2017), Express (2017-2019), and Wave (2019-2022) with OUSC.

Pena gives credit to OUSC, especially the Fury in his final club season for making him who he is as a person today. He said, "Upon joining I was given the role of captain. I had previously been in roles in leadership, but not on the field. I was on a brand-new team, with brand-new players, but I had learned to talk to everyone, and communicate in the way they wanted."

One other area that Pena is quite proud of is being a member of the Royal Rangers Boys Program, Outpost 226. Within this program, he was awarded the Gold Medal of Achievement. This award is based upon being a member for many years with continuous effort through merits, community service, fundraising, mentoring risk youth and mastering practical life skills. This award is similar to the Eagle Scout. His Senior Commander Albert Patton said, "As he grew, Christopher matured and took on leadership roles at every level. Christopher was always willing to teach and lead the younger boys. Christopher set a great example for the younger boys and was always a good role model."

He will be attending Nova Southeastern University in the fall.

JOSEPH LOMBARDO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Joseph Lombardo was born and raised in Astoria, Queens, where he met his wife, Mary. They were blessed with two children, Joey and Michelle. The Lombardo Family decided to move and raise their family on Long Island. Not long after moving to South Huntington, Lombardo began coaching soccer. He started off coaching Joey's team and then Michelle's team to many first place wins and NY State championships.

He loved the sport. In addition to coaching, he helped start the HBC TOPSoccer Program and Special Olympic Soccer League, organized and managed the HBC Peter Renzulli Labor Day Tournament, and was a champion of sportsmanship.

Lombardo became president of HBC Soccer Club and in 1989 was inducted into the LIJSL Hall of Fame. He could always be found on a soccer field, whether it was watching a game, lining fields, or handing out trophies.

Lomabrdo was a man who touched the lives of so many people. He was a kind, generous, and loving husband, father, and grandfather. He was a man of integrity who always saw the good in everyone.

Lombardo passed away on June 26, 2014, from pneumonia complications.



RECIPIENT MICHAEL GLUECK



Michael Glueck is a 2023 graduate of Great Neck South High School and featured on the varsity soccer team for two years. He was awarded the Hard Hat Award two years in a row for his dedication and work ethic. He played travel soccer for the Great Neck Soccer Club with the Dragons.

As a soccer player, Glueck is very dedicated to the game. Coach Dan Cinelli said, "Through his dedication to the team and sport, Mikey has vastly improved his skills and ball control over the years." Cinelli notes that Glueck is always hardworking and extremely respectful to his coaches, managers, teammates, referees, and opposing players.

In the classroom, Glueck has a 95.5 unweighed GPA and earned an AP Scholar with Distinction Award. Also, he was the secretary for the student government since the spring of 2022, and he started the American Sign Language Club.

To sum up Glueck, his guidance counselor said, "Mikey is a talented, bright, inquisitive young man who has an extraordinary work ethic. He displays honesty and has integrity. Mikey is dedicated and is well respected by both his peers and the faculty. Mikey does not need credit for what he does, but simply carries out his duties with pride in the result that he produces."

In the fall, he will be heading off to Tufts University.

In his own words:

"Soccer has taught me that even a large group of friends can become a family. Soccer is an easy way for me to connect with others, and I am excited to meet other players and introduce new people to the incredible sport when I attend Tufts University. I hope that my childhood teammates will accept an invitation to play with the friends that I make in the future. Inclusivity is everything to me, and I wish to meet a wide array of players who come from vastly different backgrounds."

LIJSL MERIT RECIPIENT JACK LAMBERG



Jack Lamberg is a 2023 graduate of Commack High School. He played club soccer for the Hauppauge Soccer Club with the Hauppauge USA and previously with the Commack Soccer Club from 2013 to 2016. Lamberg also participated in the LIJSL Player Developmental Program from 2015 to 2018.

In high school, he was quite busy as the Class of 2023 President for all four years there. He also received an IB Diploma, as he had a 99.64 GPA and he was a member of seven different honor societies - National, History, French, Math, English, Technical, and Science. Heather Leggio, Class of 2023 adviser, said about Lamberg's responsibility as class president, "Jack is looked to as a leader amongst his peers, not only as the class president, but simply as a person. Jack stands up for what is right, helps create compromise amongst opposing groups and leads with a fair perspective."

On the soccer field, he said how the game of soccer has developed his character. "Soccer taught me to be an educated risk-taker, where I calculate the risks and rewards of situations to make decisions."

In his essay, Lamberg wrote about his leadership skills in the classroom, which helped him on the soccer field. "During the game, I communicate with everyone on their positional play and encourage them. The leadership skills I practiced for several years on the field helped mold and shape my character, culminating in my leadership position at Commack High School."

He will be attending Binghamton University and majoring in computer science and math.

In his own words:

"Along with playing soccer, I also played varsity bowling and varsity badminton in high school. I hope to continue all three sports in college."

LIJSL MERIT RECIPIENT TAYLOR WEBER



Taylor Weber is a 2023 graduate of West Babylon Senior High School and was on the varsity women's team since tenth grade. She was awarded All-County, All-County Scholar Athlete, and Sportsmanship Award for West Babylon High School for her play on the field as a senior. Weber played club soccer for the West Babylon Soccer Club, the Lindenhurst Soccer Club and most recently the Bellmore PAL Soccer Club with the Bellmore Blue Angels.

On the soccer field, she is one of the fiercest players you will ever meet, even though she is one of the most likeable players on the team. With the Bellmore Blue Angels, she was one of the team's most feared attackers. Having has a passion to score, she would do whatever it took to put the ball in the back of the net. For the year she played for the Blue Angels, she led the team in scoring and also led them to first-place finishes in the MSC 2021 Winter and 2022 Spring College Showcases.

With her high school team, Coach Vincent Innes spoke highly about Weber and how she was a positive role model for her teammates. He said, "Taylor leads by example on and off the playing field. Her incredible work ethic leads to a consistent performance day in and day out. Taylor is always available to help out her teammates in any way possible, and is of great value to our program."

In the classroom, she was ranked 2nd out of 303 students with an unweighted average of 98.95 and a weighted average of 109.13. Her extra-curricular activities included the Leo Club (Vice-President), SADD, Art Club, SEA Club, and the Science Olympiad Team (President), which was Taylor's pride and joy. On top of this, she received AP Scholar with Distinction, was a member of the National Honor Society, Math Science Honor Society (President), National Society of High School Scholars, and National Art Honor Society. As her school counselor Emily Hassett said, "Many students use senior year as time to relax before going off to college, Taylor has done the complete opposite. She is a kind, compassionate student who is always looking for the next opportunity to help those around her and make a difference in others' lives."

Taylor will be attending SUNY ESF for environmental biology. She also will be a member of their soccer program.

In her own words:

"I am excited to be playing soccer at SUNY ESF. This sport will always hold a special place in my heart, and it has shaped me into the person I am today. Some fun facts about me are: I also play softball, I have a pet gecko, and I want to travel when I am older."



MARC STEIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Marc Stein's sudden, unexpected passing in October 2022, left the LIJSL soccer community with a huge hole. For over 25 years, he was a "larger than life" persona both within our league and game. He left his mark wherever he went, with his passion and enthusiasm to serve for all to see.

"We have lost a valued friend and colleague, who's decades long contribution to his local community, to Bellmore (JFK HS) Varsity soccer and LIJSL were immeasurable," LIJSL President Andrew Seabury said following Stein's passing.

Stein was a vibrant and active member of the LIJSL family. He served as a member of the LIJSL Board of Directors from 2012-2021, first as a trustee and then as secretary. He was involved with the Waldbaum's/LI Cup for 20 years and held roles on LIJSL's Registration Committee, Rules Committee, and Games Committee.

His presence was always visible and well-spirited. Whether it was at the LIJSL Convention conducting coaches' meetings, handling club and player registration at the League office, or directing and emceeding the trophy ceremony at the Long Island Cup Finals.

He also served at the member-club side, coaching numerous teams, first in the Bellmore, and then the Merrick/South Merrick PAL soccer club programs.

"Marc was a well-respected man who enjoyed life. The volunteer work he performed for the LIJSL was greatly appreciated and he will never be forgotten. He was a role model for many people and his contagious smile and laughter will be sorely missed," said Anthony Maresco, former LIJSL President, who worked together with Stein on the Cup for nearly two decades.

Stein's dedication to LIJSL was one of a kind, serving not only as a volunteer, but as a mentor, teacher, and friend to so many. His contribution to the Long Island Junior Soccer League both on the field and off the field has left an everlasting impact.



RECIPIENT MICHAEL FALLON



Michael Fallon is a 2023 graduate of Smithtown East High School and played JV soccer in 10th grade as well participating in varsity track for three years. He was awarded with the scholar/athlete award for track for his excellence in the classroom. He played in the LIJSL with the Smithtown Slammers Soccer Club.

While with the Wizards, Michael has been a focal point to their success. Coach Steve Abruzzi stated, " In over 6 years of coaching Michael, I've seen him exemplify what it means to be not just a scholar-athlete, but a good citizen as well. When I think about what LIJSL stands for - hard work, discipline, responsibility, and teamwork - I can confidently say that Michael exemplifies these concepts." Abruzzi also noted that Fallon is a humble overachiever, and a friend to all. Both qualities that are hard to find in a person.

Another area that Fallon has excelled in off the field is with the Boy Scouts of America. He has been involved with the organization since 2011 and he has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in 2022. One of the great things he did was to help the Little Flower Home for disadvantaged youth and adults, creating a space for a hygiene pantry that could be utilized by all the people residing there. With this successful project, Fallon collected approximately \$8,000 in hygiene product donations and \$2,000 in cash donations.

In his essay to the committee, Fallon talks about the importance of Coach Abruzzi, saying "He invested himself in every one of us. Motivated by his love of the game and a deep love and respect for his players Coach Steve left an indelible mark on many. For me, I believe Coach Steve was intentionally put in my path to help me learn critical lessons using the sport I love so much."

He will be attending The Ohio State University, double majoring in marketing and sports management.

In his own words:

"I was accepted into The Ohio State University Business Scholars Program with a double major in marketing and sports management. I plan to continue playing for the men's club team as well as continuing as a referee for US Soccer. Through my journey as an Eagle Scout and my time with the Smithtown Slammers Soccer Club both taught me how to be a leader, educated me on the importance of team spirit, sportsmanship and how to win and lose with grace. My goal is to integrate these lessons and inspire the next generation."



MICHAEL SCARPATI MEMORIAL GK SCHOLARSHIP



Born at 9 lbs. 12 ½ oz and happy, Michael Scarpati embraced life and people with arms wide open from that moment and all of the moments of the rest of his life. His bear hugs became legendary in his family.

He began to play baseball, tennis, and soccer at the age of six and later became one of the youngest competitors on the Half Hollow Hills Swim Team. Somewhere along the way, soccer became the sport he was most passionate about.

About the age of 10, his abilities as a goalkeeper began to show. He understood the game, loved the people he met, and enjoyed the places soccer took him - Columbia, MD; Springfield, VA; Coco, FL; as well as State Cup Finals, Regionals, England, Chaminade High School, and Bryant College. He was the biggest supporter of his two younger brothers and always shared the goalkeeper's perspective with his field-player brothers.

Scarpati enjoyed working with the younger players, trying to give them the benefit of some of his hard-won experience. Paul Riley said that Scarpati had something no one could teach, he had passion and heart.

He died suddenly on May 14, 2001, the day after Mother's Day at the age of 20. There is a void for all who loved him that can never be filled. We had a glimpse into his future and only saw promise.

RECIPIENT SAL MELONI



Sal Meloni is a 2023 graduate of Longwood High School, playing from 2020-2022, and he earned all-league honors in 2022 as goalkeeper. He played club soccer in the Longwood Soccer Club with the Thunder, before moving to Stony Brook/LGN.

What makes Meloni an exceptional goalkeeper is his passion to play the position and wanting to learn from the best. He noted the reason he is going into sports management and broadcasting at SUNY Delhi is that just like playing goalkeeper on the field, they both need good communicative skills because both constantly talk to teammates to direct them. Steve Searing, IMG Academy Goalkeeper Coach said, "Sal is a passionate individual who was eager to talk about goalkeeping and seeking to learn more about what, when, how, and why of goalkeeping methodology. His perspective on being a forever student of the game has always been an unique skill set for an aspiring goalkeeper."

On the soccer field and in the classroom, he loves to learn. With a GPA of 92, he was a member of the National Honor Society and in Honors Broadcast Journalism. One thing he excels at in the classroom is his free thinking and ability to express his opinion when speaking about a subject/topic. As his English teacher Diane Guisti said, "Sal is a natural leader and more than willing to give of his time for others. I know Sal possesses both the drive as well as the abilities to accomplish anything he sets his mind to."

He will continue his education at SUNY Delhi University and be a part of the men's soccer program.

In his own words:

"My name is Salvatore Meloni, class of 2023. Soccer has been a huge part of my life, since I was three years old. I am an outgoing, highly motivated person who gives 110 percent, so that I can become the best player on and off the field, while being a compassionate and caring person ultimately helping my teammates, friends, and family be the best they can be."

MICHAEL SECKO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Some people make a difference by being who they are. That was Michael Secko. He touched many lives in all areas of his life - family, work, soccer, and community. The ultimate volunteer, he shared his wisdom and set a good example to those under his care, and he put great emphasis in work done well, especially pertaining to the sport he loved most, soccer. Never did he guess that his involvement would take him places both domestic and abroad. A positive person, he looked for the good in everyone he met and every challenging situation that arose along the way.

Starting his career in the Father Joe Basel Sports Program through St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church, Secko volunteered as a Munchkin League soccer coach for his eldest son, Michael III. Soon after, he became the Program Director and he remained in this position for 20 years. Looking for a solid soccer program in which to enroll his children, he discovered the Sound Beach Soccer Club. As a committed father and fan of the sport, he took on the role of Head Coach for two teams, the Sound Beach Wildcats, Michael III's team, and the Sound Beach Breakers, Matthew's team. For many people, this would be enough, but not for Secko. He went on to become the Club Vice President, and later President.

In addition, his affiliation with LIJSL led him to serve on the Games Committee, Convention Committee, and Waldbaum's/LI Cup Coordinator. He also helped with presentations for the College Bound Player Committee and was on the Exceptional HS Senior Soccer Game Committee. On a state level, he coordinated for the State Cup Tournament and was team administrator for the State Olympic Development Program.

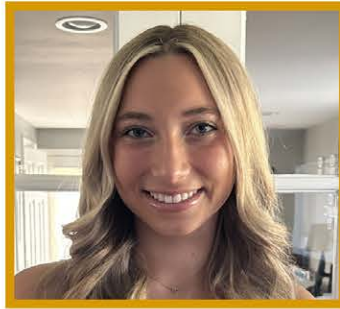
Over the course of his life, many admired Mike's overwhelming accomplishments, including a number of Waldbaum's Cup wins, out-of-state titles, several sportsmanship awards, taking the Sound Beach Wildcat team from 9th Division in 1987 to 1st Division in 1992, and a personal highlight, winning the State Challenge Cup in 1994 with the Sound Beach Breakers. Aside from the medals and trophies, however, Mike's most cherished accomplishment was being an assistant coach and administrator for the Terryville Fire in which his youngest son, Mark, was a member. In 2007, the Terryville Fire won the State, Region I, and National Championships. It was a proud journey to have shared with his son.

Beyond soccer, he was a kind, loving, and generous man. His love of family knew no bounds. Soccer was about spending time with family, and all three of his sons will forever remember their biggest fan, the man who supported their entire journey.

Sadly, in December 2012, Secko lost his battle to cancer, almost one year to the day he discovered his diagnosis. The void left behind can never be filled by the ones who loved him most. For them, he was the who made this world a little bit better, a little bit brighter. In his memory and in celebration of his life, we hope that his memory continues. After making a significant difference to those around him, we hope this scholarship will make a difference, too.



RECIPIENT AVA MATLIN



Ava Matlin is a 2023 graduate of Plainview Old Bethpage High School and played four years on the varsity team, competing with the junior varsity team in the 8th grade. During her senior year, she was the team captain and was All-County Honorable Mention in 2022. She was also a member of the basketball and lacrosse programs. She played her club soccer in the Plainview Old Bethpage Soccer Club with the POB Fury.

Matlin has been a member of the POB Fury since its inception at U10 and is a player that would do whatever it took to see the team succeed. As Coach Mark Hollander said, "Ava Matlin has been one of the most impactful players on the Fury since Day One, and I have had the privilege of being her coach since the girls were five years old. As a team, we've always benefited from Ava's infectious spirit and always play better when she is on the field. Ava raises everybody's game."

In her spare time, Ava has been a TOPSoccer buddy. She did this for the past four years, giving back to those by teaching them the game of soccer from what she learned from the coaches of the POB Fury. This year, Matlin has added working with the Little Nuggets for POB, teaching little kids to play the game she loves. Last summer, she headed to Israel and volunteered for Halzalah Rescue, working five-hour shifts in the ambulance helping out people in need of immediate medical attention.

In the classroom, she had a weighted GPA of 96.635 and got a 1350 on her SAT. She was a member of the National Honor Society (Secretary), National Art Honor Society, and was a member of DECA and her experiences helping others got her accepted into the Honors Nursing Program at the University of Delaware.

She will be attending the University of Delaware in fall majoring in nursing.

In her own words:

"I will be majoring in nursing at the University of Delaware. In high school, I was a four-year, three-sport athlete."



MILES FOR MATT FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



The Miles for Matt Foundation was founded after Matt Scarpati, 19, who was cycling on the Wantagh State Bike Path, was struck and killed by a drunk, drugged, and speeding motorcyclist, who left the Wantagh State Parkway at speeds estimated to be 100 miles per hour. Scarpati was killed that day, but our hope was that we would make recreation in the area safer. Through community efforts and those of elected officials, we were successful in having guardrails installed.

In addition, the bronze sculpture of a cyclist was placed in the park. This sculpture inspires conversations about many things, such as safety, cycling, and life.

Through donations and fundraising events, Miles for Matt Foundation supports scholarships, athletics, MADD, and medical research.

The Journey continues...





RECIPIENT JASMINE ROLDAN



Jasmine Roldan is a 2023 graduate of Hicksville High School and was a member of the varsity soccer team for four years, receiving the 2022 Dan Deegan Unsung Hero Soccer Award, which is awarded to the player that makes a substantial, yet unrecognized contribution to the team. It was the first time for a Hicksville player to receive the award. She also received the 2021 and 2022 Coaches Award, in recognition of outstanding athletic achievement. She played her club soccer for the Hicksville American Soccer Club and the Hicksville Kickers/Lightning.

On the field, she led by example as the co-captain of her high school team in 2022, starting the last three years as the team earned a record of 32-3-4. Coach Richard Hinnerschietz said, "Jasmine is an inspiration to her teammates. When things are tough at practice or in a game they just look at her and that she is always fighting to make us better and they all respond."

On the club level, Roldan also found success as a player and later started coaching staff kids from three to 10 years old. HASC Technical Director Bryan Alcantra said, "I've had many people share their feedback on her natural talent for engaging young players and controlling her groups. It's impressive, but, above all, it comes from a genuine care for her hometown club, a commitment to doing what's right, and a level of responsibility that gives me hope for this younger generation."

In the classroom, she was recognized for her academic excellence for being a member of the National Art Honor Society (Secretary), American Sign Language Honor Society, and awarded National PTA Reflections Outstanding Interpretation for Visual Arts.

With her essay, Jasmine wrote about getting into coaching and how soccer has given her confidence every day on and off the field. She said, "To them I am 'Coach Jasmine' and I have the privilege of making them smile as they make me smile. I started coaching during the spring season of 2022 at Old Country Road Elementary School. This is the same field that I first played soccer on 13 years ago. It is truly a privilege to be given this full circle opportunity."

She will be attending SUNY Old Westbury, as well as playing for the women's soccer program there.

In her own words:

"I have chosen to continue my academic and athletic career at SUNY Old Westbury. I will be majoring in Environmental Studies and playing soccer for the Panthers. In addition to coaching intramural soccer for the Hicksville American Soccer Club (HASC), I also teach American Sign Language (ASL) classes at the library for elementary school kids and their parents. I am very passionate about both soccer and ASL and am happy to have found a way to incorporate them further in my life. I hope to earn my certification to interpret ASL soon so that I can help children and senior citizens have their voices heard."



PAT GRECO SCHOLARSHIP



Pat Greco is the quintessential volunteer and LIJSL players, parents, and leadership have often been the beneficiaries. Greco joined the Scholarship Committee in 1991 and was Committee Chair from 2000 through 2013, leaving this post only because of her relocation to North Carolina. Pat is a 30+ year volunteer within the soccer community and was inducted into the Eastern New York State Soccer Hall of Fame in 2008 and the LIJSL Hall of Fame in 1998.

Greco has been the Director of College Bound Player Program for the LIJSL, as well as serving as Director of Girls LIJSL ODP, Exceptional Senior Games, and Scholarship Committee. Greco and her husband Frank Sr. have three children; Ellen Grecco-Gilmore, who played club and varsity soccer and graduated from Fordham University, Beth Grecco-Gothers, who was a National Pool Player and received a full scholarship to The University of Connecticut and was a 3x All-American Selection, and Frank Jr., who played collegiately at The United States Naval Academy where he was a four-year varsity soccer player and later served six years in the United States Marine Corps. A genuine soccer family, Frank Sr. was a longtime soccer referee.

Greco has personally helped countless players get to college, many with full scholarships, volunteering thousands of hours of her time and always available to help a disadvantaged family with a difficult problem. She is currently working to identify Hispanic players in her region who need help with the college-search process, sometimes offering pro-bono help to anyone who asks. However, in recent years, a spinoff of her volunteer work, came about. In addition to soccer, lacrosse and football, she has worked with numerous student athletes, representing nearly every sport, as well as lesser-known sports such as fencing, rifle/pistol, crew, cheerleading, and even chess. It gives her great pleasure to help others be the best athletes and best students. She has worked with a diverse group of student athletes, including a home-schooled soccer player from Florida, to many international soccer players, placing a female soccer player from Bangkok, Thailand to Hofstra University on scholarship. Best of all and it is true, she does boast a 100% success rate. "There is a school for everyone to play at as well as to study, that's what makes America such a great country."

When asked the true value of her work, Greco continually replies, "My most important offering is to find the very best academic opportunities for the student athletes I work with. Using their sport to open the heavy door of the admissions process and finding money to pay for it."



RECIPIENT JACOB RAPHAN



Jacob Raphan is a 2023 graduate of Oceanside High School. For the Sailors, he was a three-year member of the varsity soccer team, where he was selected captain his senior season. Also, while at Oceanside, he was a three-year starter on the varsity basketball team. He played soccer for the Oceanside Fury for the Oceanside United Soccer Club and was the goalkeeper for this team.

Being a leader was what Coach Patrick Turk was looking for when he named Raphan captain in the fall of 2022. Coach Turk said, "As a captain, Jacob was not afraid to stand up for what the right decision is and fight for the betterment of the team. The team looked at Jacob as an advocate for players, the team, and somebody who wanted to see the team succeed." Turk labeled Jacob as a 'keeper in one word, "shutdown." With his leadership, Raphan led the Sailors to the Nassau County Finals in 2022 and as Daniel Art said, "His leadership is going to be sorely missed next season."

With his club team, the Fury, Raphan was an important member of the team. He stressed the importance on how the coaching staff kept the team engaged. He said in his essay, "Practicing two or even three times a week was not easy for a group of young boys, but the trainers at Showtime Soccer never made it feel like a chore, but rather it felt like a fun game as soccer is supposed to."

In the classroom, Raphan had a weighed grade point average of 102. Also, he has been busy volunteering at the JCC (Jewish Community Center) and is one of the founders of the SASO Club (Student Athlete Serving Others). He was volunteered at the Ezra Center for People with Disabilities.

He will be attending Vassar College and will be a member of the men's soccer team.

In his own words:

"Something you might not know about me is that I am also a basketball player and I played on the Oceanside varsity team for 3 years."



PETER C. COLLINS MEMORIAL PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Peter Collins became LIJSL President in 1977 and stepped down from that position on January 1, 2004. Under his inclusive leadership, significant achievements occurred.

The LIJSL quadrupled in size and now sports more than 1,500 teams. In 1978, the LIJSL became the first formal soccer league to begin a Special Children's Program. In that same year, an annual springtime cup competition was created for all LIJSL teams. Originally named the Long Island Cup, it morphed into the Chase Cup in 1982 and became the Waldbaum's Challenge in 1996 and is currently known as the LI Cup. Collins began the esteemed LIJSL Sportsmanship Program in 1980, now copied around the world, and he was influential in starting the high school all-star competition, known as the Exceptional Senior Games, which also has been copied across the United States by other soccer leagues. The LIJSL Convention was created in 1983, and it quickly became America's largest soccer convention. The creation of the Long Island Soccer Park in Plainview, which now bears his name, soon followed in 1985 and has been used by the LIJSL's TOPSoccer Program and other teams on a rotational basis.

As a coach, Collins led the Hicksville Minutemen to the McGuire Cup Finals in both 1979 and 1980.

Collins has been inducted into the LIJSL, Eastern New York, and National Soccer Hall of Fame, and is a lifetime member of the United States Soccer Federation. The LIJSL Board of Directors changed the name to the Peter C. Collins Soccer Park on May 22, 2004 in honor of the legendary figure who had given his life for youth soccer.

He did a very rare thing indeed. He made us dream of all the possibilities when people work together for the good of the game.

Peter passed away December 2018 at the age of 87.



RECIPIENT NICHOLAS PIOMBINO



Nicholas Piombino is a 2023 graduate of Commack High School. He played for Hauppauge USA in the Hauppauge Soccer Club. He played for this team since 2019, previously playing for the Commack Lightning from 2014 to 2019. In high school, he participated with the varsity badminton team and was recognized by Newsday as a Top Ten Suffolk Varsity Badminton player for 2023.

In his essay, he noted that he did not make his high school soccer team, but it did not dishearten him. It actually made him a better person because of the hard work he put in that summer to try to make the team. He took those life skills and put them into his high school's IB program. Also, in the classroom, Piombino has an unweighted GPA of 98.15 and the awards he received academically are impressive. He was a member of the National, History, Italian, Math, Technical, and Science Honor Societies.

One thing that Piombino has done in his spare time is volunteering to assist soccer teams in the neighborhood. He said, "I really enjoyed helping out, and the experiences. It taught me important lessons about being a leader and contributing to my community." He also refereed LIJSL games for LISRA when not competing in his own games.

Coach Eric Lamberg said about Piombino, "Nick is more than a player. He is a leader on and off the field and is determined to make sure that all around him are provided with opportunity to excel in a positive environment."

He will be attending College of William and Mary in the fall.

In his own words:

"Something that you would not know about me is that when I started playing soccer, I was initially the 'keeper, however, I switched to midfield when I was in the third grade because I was scared that the fourth graders would kick the ball so hard that they would break my arms."

ROBINSON-MONSES PAY IT FORWARD SCHOLARSHIP



On July 19, 2009, Sean Monses was awarded the Modell's Scholarship from LIJSL. He graduated from Chaminade High School and won tthe CHSAA State Championship with the soccer team in 2007 and was named All-League the following year. He continued his education at Catholic University, before he decided to serve our country and attend the United States Military Academy West Point.

Monses was commissioned as a Medical Service Officer in May of 2016, and is currently an Aviation Maintenance Company Commander for Delta Company 2-10 Assault Helicopter Battalion Fort Drum.

Laura Robinson, her husband Ken, and son Sean wanted to pay it forward for someone who intends to go into military service.



RECIPIENT JACK YOUNG



Jack Young is a 2023 graduate of Floral Park Memorial High School. While there, he was a member of the varsity soccer program for the past three years and also ran track in 11th and 12th grade. For club soccer, he was a member of the Floral Park Soccer Club and was on the Warriors.

As a member of his squad in high school, Young's achievements have been remarkable. He was captain his senior year (2022), was recipient of the Scholar Athlete Scholarship from the Nassau County Soccer Association (2022), was an All-County Honorable Mention (2022), and was Nassau County Soccer Conference Class A West Player of the Week (2022). He also participated in the Senior All Star Game (2022) as well.

Young's play was no different with his club team. Coach Liam Guilfoyle called Young "the engine" of the team, adding that "Jack plays soccer with a passion that is matched by few, and that passion is contagious for those around him. He truly understands the concept of a team."

In the classroom, the awards and achievements were numerous. Here are some of the awards that Young received during his time at Floral Park: National Honor Society, National English Honor Society, National World Language Honor Society (Vice-President), National Social Studies Honor Society, National Math Honor Society, and National Science Honor Society. Plus, he had time to volunteer his time with the St. Baldrick Foundation, helped with the Island Harvest Food Drive (2022) and tutored underclassmen in Italian.

He will be attending SUNY Maritime in the fall and be a part of the men's soccer program.

In his own words:

"I will be attending SUNY Maritime next year as a soccer commit. I love trail running and biking. After college, I will be commissioned into the Navy."



ROCCO AMOROSO MEMORIAL SPORTSMANSHIP SCHOLARSHIP



Rocco Amoroso was born in 1926 in Brooklyn, N.Y., but spent most of his childhood in his cherished hometown of Rapino, Italy. It was in that small rustic town that he first developed his love for soccer. At the age of 13 he returned to America, living in Richmond Hill, Queens. After serving in the US Army, he graduated from City College in 1950 where he was a member of their soccer team. He settled in Huntington in 1963 where he and his wife, Rosemarie, raised four children.

Amoroso is a member of the Hall of Fame for LIJSL and Eastern New York, as well as a US Soccer Life Member since 2014. He became involved in the LIJSL in the late 1970s, recognizing an opportunity to spread his passion for sportsmanship and fair play. He founded the LIJSL Sportsmanship Program, "Building Character Through Soccer" in 1980, the first official sportsmanship program in youth sports. The concept of fair play continues to reach all corners of the state and around the world. Each season, a sportsmanship award is granted to teams in every division to recognize fair play among players, coaches, and spectators.

In addition, every June, the Eastern New York State Open Cup Championship is held in LaGrange, NY. The Rocco Amoroso Sportsmanship Award is presented to the most deserving teams. When reflecting on the program in 1987, he said, "I began to think there's got to be something more valuable to gain from sports than just winning and losing. I wanted to bring about a change in people's attitudes through sports."

This award is presented to a soccer player who has demonstrated exemplary qualities of sportsmanship, teamwork, and character, attributes that Amoroso promoted throughout his life. As he once said, "In this beautiful game of soccer, let us all reinforce ethics into the game and make it even more beautiful."

He was a man of admirable character and spirited personality. He was devoted to his family and his strong faith in God. Always looking to engage with others, he never missed an opportunity to spread his message and share a smile wherever he went. In his own words, he reminded us that "Character building is a compass that guides us on our path. It is the strongest thread in the fabric of a good life." Amoroso would truly be proud to see the ideals of sportsmanship and of character continue in LIJSL today. He is not here today, but his spirit lives on. He was a blessing to all who knew him.



RECIPIENT SEAN BROWNE



Sean Browne is a 2023 graduate of Wantagh High School and was a two-year member of varsity soccer. He also played for the Bellmore United for the past five years in the Bellmore PAL Soccer program, and previously was a member of the Wantagh/Seaford Cyclones. He also was a member of the LIJSL Player Development Program in 2017.

In the classroom, he is an exceptional student, scoring a 1430 on his SAT, and holding an unweighted GPA of 97.3 with a weighted GPA of 106.1. Browne was Student Government President and received an AP Capstone Diploma. He also has represented the high school at Board of Education meetings each month and made the building morning announcements each morning. Heather Naughton said about Browne in the classroom, "Sean is truly a pleasure to have in class. His drive is matched by his humor, his true joy for academic discovery. He is one of the most-driven students we have ever worked with."

On the soccer field, he is a true competitor. Coach Kevin Doolin said, "Sean is kind, considerate, and in 12 seasons never got a yellow card. Now, if you know soccer, you know as a defender it's difficult not to get a card, but that's Sean." Doolin also said, "Sean never let him down and that is was an honor to coach and be his friend."

In his essay, Browne wrote about how he became a center back on his Bellmore United team saying, "When I first played in LIJSL, I lacked the confidence and leadership abilities needed to lead a team as a center defender, which is why I started as leftback. Now I currently play every minute of every game as a center defender, simultaneously commanding the field and supporting my teammates."

He will be attending the University of Pittsburgh and majoring in Environmental Science.

SANDRA ATLAS BASS SCHOLARSHIP



This scholarship award was established through the generosity of the Sandra Atlas Bass and Edythe & Sol G. Atlas Fund, Inc.

Bass, a real estate executive and philanthropist, involved with many charities in the Long Island region, especially health care, youth development, and animal welfare, founded the fund.



RECIPIENT FIONA SCHLEGEL



Fiona Schlegel is a 2023 graduate from Eastport South Manor Jr/Sr High School. She was a two-year soccer player on the varsity team and lacrosse team. She played her club soccer with the Manorville Soccer Club, currently with the Manorville Panthers and previously with the Manorville Rockets.

While playing multiple sports throughout the school year and with her club team, she excelled in the classroom. This year she was the salutatorian of the class with an unweighed GPA of 99.491 and being ranked 2nd in the class of 258. Her extracurricular activities while at high school were impressive. She was treasurer of the high school yearbook, a member of the Chamber Orchestra, treasurer of both the National English Honor Society and World Language Honor Society and was in the National Honor Society. On top of all of this, she was a member of the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County, troop 2413.

On the soccer field, she shined as well, never stepping down from a challenge. Coach Cortney Pettit summed up Schlegel best saying, " Her love of the sport shined brightly and she was always working hard out on the field. Fiona was one of the most dedicated girls on my team, showing up to every practice and game early and ready to work."

Schlegel wrote in her essay about the experiences she had with the Rockets and Coach Pettit. She wrote, "Playing on the same travel team for multiple years was one of the best experiences I had. Despite being the youngest person on the team, I always felt at home because the other girls were so welcoming."

She took these experiences and friendships she made with her teammates and used them to balance soccer and academics and now will be attending Boston College in the fall with a major in biology and a concentration in genetics.

In her own words:

"I received the Gold Torch Community Service Award in Girl Scouts and while at Eastport South Manor High School, I played both soccer and lacrosse. In both sports I was named a scholar-athlete for excelling both on and off the field. I also played the violin for the chamber orchestra and pit orchestra and was a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society."

SEAN URDA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



On January 26, 2015, in his senior year at John Glenn High School, Sean Urda tragically lost his life in a sledding accident. He was one of those special people that lived every day as if it were his last. He knew that a smile made a difference and that laughter could warm your heart. He touched everyone he came in contact with in a special way. "Work hard, play hard" is a phrase that applied to the way he lived his life. He was always aiming higher and working to become better whether in school, on the field, or in life. Above all else, Urda loved his family, friends, and soccer, and he was loved in return.

As a one year old, Urda got his first soccer ball and it never left his side. By three years old, he was a soccer dynamo and the Elwood Soccer Club allowed him to begin playing early. By eight, he was playing on both his team and his older brother's team, when they needed subs. Later, he went to play for Northport Soccer Club and his tournament team, Score FC. He was recognized as a leader on his teams and named captain. In high school, Urda was a three-year varsity player and awarded All-League in his senior year. The #14, his jersey number, has become very important to his family and friends. His high school will retire his number once his younger brother graduates. The #14 has become a symbol of Urda to many that cared about him.

He was an all-around athlete and enjoyed lacrosse, skiing, snowboarding, and his favorite gym sport - pickle ball - but his passion was always soccer. In addition to high school athletics, he was a member of Natural Helpers, National Honor Society, the marching and jazz band, and a counselor at the Huntington Playground Camp. His dream was to play soccer at a collegiate level and he hoped that his academic achievements and goals would align with a school that he would attend and competitively play for. He was accepted to all 14 schools he had applied to but unfortunately, he never got the chance to choose.

What we would like you to know of him is that people always came first - family, friends, teammates, classmates, everyone. He went out of his way to listen, to make someone smile, and to help anyone when they were down. He was 100 percent genuine and a true friend to all.



RECIPIENT GABRIEL ALCARAZ



Gabriel Alcaraz is a 2023 graduate of Manhasset High School. He played his club soccer this past year with the Port Washington Soccer Club and the Gladiators and previously with the Manhasset Soccer Club. In high school, Alcaraz was a member of the high-school program during his four years at Manhasset. Other sports he participated in were lacrosse and wrestling.

The one aspect that makes him exceptional is that he looks to give back both on the soccer field and in the community. Alcaraz is co-founder of Deeds 4 Needs Charity, a non-profit organization, which he started back in 2018. This organization provides free tutoring services for kids that are struggling academically. Dolores Lloves-Cid, Bilingual School Psychologist, Freeport School District, said "Gabriel has been wonderful to work with and has personally tutored and mentored many students over the years, He has received more accolades than any other tutor volunteer. He is not only an exceptionally bright student with excellent teaching skills, he is also extremely compassionate and patient with his students."

On the soccer field, Gabriel will not let others outwork him. He is always looking to get better and challenges himself by taking on the best player on the opposing team by outworking them throughout the match. Coach Vincent Albanese said, " He always gave you 110 percent regardless of the weather, the opponent, or any other outside factor. Whether it was a game or practice, Gabriel always exhibited his good character by being resilient, grateful, humble, self-disciplined, and respectful."

Academically, he has been acknowledged for his 4.0 GPA by being on the High Honor Roll during his four years at high school. Alcaraz was also in the National, Social Studies, Spanish, English, Science, and Tri-M Music Honor Societies. Also, since August 2022, Alcaraz has been a volunteer fire fighter with the Manhasset Volunteer Fire Fighter Company 2.

He will head to Massachusetts to attend Boston College as a psychology major.

In his own words:

"I started kicking a soccer ball shortly after I learned to walk. 'Futbol,' as my grandparents would say, is embedded in the fabric of my family's genes and had helped shape the person I am today. In the fall, I will attend Boston College as a psychology major and hope to continue to play soccer."

TANIA BONILLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Tania Bonilla used to call the soccer fields her second home. Win or lose, she always had a smile on her face because she knew she had given her all and she was doing what she loved most. Some days, she would go from varsity soccer to club soccer to pick-up soccer and then coach youth soccer. There was no denying how much she loved soccer.

It wasn't always like that. When she was five years old, she wasn't thrilled about playing. Her dad had to bribe her - a dollar per goal which she would later use for ice cream. Kids are so literal at that age. She held him to it - there were times when she would even score own goals because "a goal was a goal" and after the games, her dad had to pay up. She made sure she got a dollar for each one.

As she grew older, it was no longer about ice cream or money. Bonilla had developed a passion for the sport like no other. She started playing at the Brentwood Youth Soccer Club and was the only girl on an all-boys team. Her talent and skills with the ball spoke for itself and led the team to be called "Tania's Team." From that point forward, everyone knew she was going to dominate the field.

Bonilla showcased her talent while playing for the Brentwood Firecats. She made lifelong friends and they were inseparable. Her family often supported her at games and her mom's cheering could be heard from fields away. She did what she could to score and to stop the opposing team from shooting the ball. When the team graduated, she continued to join teams and did what she could to keep playing.

When Bonilla played varsity for Brentwood High School, the momentum continued, and she became captain of the team. Even with a few injuries, she did not give up. She worked hard and showed how dedicated she was to the sport. She was a leader - she wouldn't tear anyone down and did what she could to motivate her team to work hard and, most of all, have fun.

As a college student, Bonilla's season at SUNY Old Westbury was also unforgettable. She developed a close relationship with her teammates and they spent anytime they could together. They'd often grab lunch and play ball on campus. Their bond easily translated onto the field and ultimately led the team to the first round of playoffs; something that hadn't been done in years.

When she wasn't on the field, she'd still find a way to kick a soccer ball around wherever she could. She and her family would play well after the sun had already set or until someone ended up hurt or crying. She also wasn't afraid of competition - there were times where she'd play pick-up coed soccer with men twice her age, height, and weight. She was resilient, a team player, and a hard worker.

Bonilla left her mark on the field and in our hearts. She will always be remembered by her contagious giggle, how talented she was on the field, and how loving and caring she was towards everyone.



RECIPIENT JULIANA AYALA



Juliana Ayala is a 2023 graduate from Brentwood High School. She was a member of the high school varsity program for two years as she anchored the defense. In LIJSL, Juliana played for the Brentwood Soccer Club, playing for the Bobcat and in 2021, she also helped out the Brentwood Firecats as a club player.

Ayala's soccer career is quite interesting, as she did not play on a competitive travel team until the seventh grade. That was when she tried out for the Brentwood Middle School team and she made the squad, which led her to join the Brentwood Bobcats. As she said in her essay, "I forced myself to accept that these girls could kick way harder than me, that they could play 80-minute games like it was nothing, but, by accepting these facts, I also realized that I could become just like them, or better. Seeing the skill these girls had made me want to be like them, instead of letting that feeling become frustration and envy, it became motivation to better myself."

On her club team the Bobcats, she is the team captain and she is capable of handling any task that is given to her. Marta Garcia said, "During my relationship with Juliana, I have experienced that she strives to do her best, she is very passionate about everything she sets her mind to."

This is also true in the classroom. She is always looking for ways to help others that might need help. Gregory Bubitosi, her psychology and sociology teacher said, "Juliana also displays impressive leadership skills, she took it upon herself to offer tutoring to students struggling in our classes and collaborated with me on the best ways to aide her classmates."

She will be attending Boston University, specifically their school of education.

In her own words:

"I intend to pursue education at Boston University, and eventually come back to my hometown of Brentwood and give back to the community. I wish to become an advocate for the future generations and all them to have the same, amazing opportunities I have been given. This includes pushing for more involvement in sports among children, as Brentwood has the potential to become a better community and flourish."



COLLEGE ATTENDING

NAME	CLUB	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE ATTENDING
Gabriel Alcaraz	Port Washington	Manhasset HS	Boston College
Juliana Ayala	Brentwood	Brentwood HS	Boston University
Sean Browne	Bellmore	Mepham HS	Marist College
Finnegan Corcoran-Doolin	Bellmore	Mepham HS	Marist College
Juliana Edwards	Commack	Commack HS	University of Delaware
Jessica Fackler	Massapequa	Massapequa HS	Syracuse University
Michael Fallon	Smithtown	Smithtown HS	Ohio State University
Michael Glueck	Smithtown	Centereach HS	Tufts University
Jack Lamberg	Hauppauge	Commack HS	Binghamton University
Natalia Lutz	Massapequa	Babylon HS	Oneonta State University
Sophia Mania	Rockville Centre	South Side HS	Tufts University
Jonas Mata	Valley Stream	Valley Stream Central HS	Queens College
Ava Matlin	Plainview Old Bethpage	Plainview Old Bethpage HS	University of Delaware



COLLEGE ATTENDING

NAME	CLUB	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE ATTENDING
Sal Meloni	Longwood	Longwood HS	SUNY Delhi University
Nicholas Mrakovcic	Floral Park	Kellenberg Memorial HS	University of South Carolina
Nicholas Neri	Deer Park	East Islip HS	University of Buffalo
Christopher Pena	Oceanside	Oceanside HS	Nova Southeastern University
Isabella Pepe	East Islip	East Islip HS	George Washington University
Nicholas Piombino	Hauppauge	Commack HS	College of William & Mary
Jacob Raphan	Oceanside	Oceanside HS	Vassar College
Jasmine Roldan	Hicksville	Hicksville HS	SUNY Old Westbury
Fiona Schlegel	Manorville	Manorville HS	Boston College
Riley Schroeder	Hicksville	Kellenberg Memorial HS	Coastal Carolina University
Efstathios Spathis	Hicksville	Bethpage HS	St. Joseph's University, NY
Taylor Weber	Bellmore	West Babylon HS	SUNY ESF
Jack Young	Floral Park	Floral Park HS	SUNY Maritime



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