LONG ISLAND JUNIOR SOCCER LEAGUE

SCHOLARSHIP

JULY 20, 2025



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-laia Presidential Scholarship **Bill Peet Memorial Scholarship Brittney Walsh Memorial Fund Scholarship Brittney Walsh Memorial Fund Scholarship** Carolyn Page Memorial 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 Matthew Scarpati Memorial Scholarship** Michael Scarpati Memorial Goalkeeper Scholarship Michael Secko Memorial Scholarship Miles For Matt Foundation Scholarship Miles For Matt Foundation Scholarship Miles For Matt Foundation Scholarship Pat Grecco Scholarship Peter C. Collins Memorial Presidential Scholarship Rocco Amoroso Memorial Sportsmanship Scholarship Sandra Atlas Bass Scholarship Sean Urda Memorial Scholarship **Tania Bonilla Memorial Scholarship**

RECIPIENT

Manal Layachi **Jonah Drew Thomas Mark Emma Cross Emily Love** Samantha Solar Peter Udilovich Samantha Donovan **David Scala Andrew Greco** Itai Hershko Giulia Zingone **Nick Tonorezos** Nicholas Genna **Alex Cerrotta Owen Sacket** Sophia McCord **lack Visnius** Oscar Dalton Michael Donovan **Avery Whitehouse Maura Reilly** Dana Scruggs **Patrick Himmel** ladvn Hsu **Iyoshu Baxter Christine Lombardi**

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 MANAL LAYACHI



Manal Layachi started volunteering with Valley Stream TOPSoccer back in 2014. Her coach noted that she helps maintain a safe environment and keeps the players focused and engaged. Most of all, she ensures that they have a fun and enjoyable experience. Her service is greatly appreciated by kids and parents alike, and the club is grateful to her for it. She is a dedicated, hardworking, and respectful individual.

In addition to volunteering with TOPSoccer, Layachi does Community Orchestra over the summer by giving free outdoor concerts in July, organizes activities for Ultimate Martial Arts and Fitness Camp and is a Reach Volunteer at Hofstra University Summer Camp. She also reads books to children with special needs at the Elmont Library.

Layachi is a member of the National, Math, Science, Tri-M, Language, Rho Kappa, and English Honor Societies. She is a part of the Future Teacher Club, Breakfast Chamber Orchestra Club, Treble Choir, and District Chorus Ensemble. She also plays club soccer and is on the varsity cross country track team. She is the managing editor of the North Star Student News Publication as well as sports section editor. She plays the violin and has been on the Principal's List throughout high school. She has received awards and honors in track, AP Capstone Research, physical education leadership, Spanish, and is an All-County Musician who is a District Music Festival Scholarship recipient.

Her father started Valley Stream TOPSoccer to fit the needs of her brother and she became a "buddy." She explained that it feels good helping kids with special needs learn and enjoy soccer. It's taught her patience, kindness, and human connection, while helping her grow as a person and motivating her to strive to be the best she can be. She gets to connect with players and witness their personal growth in both soccer and life. TOPSoccer has also brought her family together and the program has given her the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than herself, while also connecting with the community. It has had a profound effect on her life as she may become a special education teacher and continue to provide help to those who need it.

Layachi will attend St. John's University in the fall and major in education and possibly special ed. Since she will be going to school locally, she may be able to find time to continue her work with Valley Stream TOPSoccer.

RECIPIENT JONAH DREW



Jonah Drew has been a volunteer with Rockville Centre TOPSoccer since the eighth grade. According to his TOPSoccer coordinator, he is one of the most regular and reliable volunteers. He has patience, adaptability, energy, and enthusiasm. He is characterized as a mature young man whose commitment to TOPSoccer has been outstanding. He is among the first to greet the athletes and pair himself with one of the younger athletes with the greatest needs. Parents and players have expressed their gratitude for his help, time and time again. He has been a model volunteer who has taken pride in his work with the special-needs athletes. He is a hard worker and has a heart of gold.

Besides his time with TOPSoccer, he was a volunteer announcer during the Hoops For All Inaugural Challengers Basketball season, and participated in South Side's "Best Buddies' program, where he interacts with special-needs students in a social setting. He has been a volunteer since the ninth grade and eventually became a staff member at the Town of Hempstead's ANCHOR Program and summer camp. He handled swimming, bowling, and the Friday Night Lights Program at ANCHOR. He has given a great deal of time to the Tommy Brull Foundation in the mission to raise funds to benefit various people with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. He was also a part of RVC Impact Community Outreach.

In school, Drew was on the High Honor Roll, All-Conference in soccer, Most Improved Player on his varsity soccer team, and received the Scholar-Athletes Award from NYS Public HS Athletic Association. He was part of the RVC Boy's Basketball League and Tunnel to Towers (Runner). He also founded the Sports Analytic Club, and was a member of DECA Business Club and Biology Club.

He became involved with TOPSoccer because of his strong bond with his Aunt Becky, who has Cerebral Palsy. He has taken every possible opportunity to get involved with the special-needs community, and he knew TOPSoccer was the place for him. It has been uplifting to see how kids facing difficult challenges never wiped a smile from their faces. He felt it was cool to see a game that has brought him so much joy, do the same for others. As someone who takes soccer very seriously, going to TOPSoccer was a much needed reminder that soccer is ultimately a game and any stress that comes from it is completely unwarranted. Seeing all the players, whether they score a goal or hardly touch the ball, having the time of their life gave him a warm feeling inside. He is not sure that feeling could be found anywhere else. TOPSoccer gave him profound relationships with players, parents, and other volunteers. He likes to think that he had a positive impact on everyone. It was an unforgettable experience and he is infinitely grateful for those Sunday mornings on the field.

Drew is attending Syracuse University and majoring in sports analytics this fall.

RECIPIENT THOMAS MARK



Between Auburndale, Valley Stream, and now New Hyde Park, Thomas Mark has volunteered with TOPSoccer since 2022. His last coach says that he displayed the dedication and desire to give back rather than have free time and is a quiet, humble, responsible individual who gets the job done. He has patience, enthusiasm, and maturity which is needed when assisting TOPSoccer athletes. He is well liked by players and coaches alike and always makes sure the players are safe and having fun. He gravitates towards those athletes that are "lost" on the field and struggle with their skills and attention span. He has the insight to see if anyone needs help and doesn't wait to be told what to do.

Mark is the consummate volunteer. Aside from TOPSoccer, he is a Special Olympics referee, Holy Family parish sacristan, and religious education teacher's aide. He is an Our Lady of Grace Summer Camp assistant, soccer and math peer tutor, Bridge of Life organizer and volunteer, and League of Yes volunteer coach and toy drive organizer. He also prepared meals and activities for Ronald McDonald House, packaged meals and holiday deliveries for God's Love We Deliver, fundraised and acted as photographer for the Lustgarden Foundation, and volunteered with Wreaths Across America. He participated in Electchester-Community Clean Ups, and is an Autism Speaks helper. He assisted marketing consultants with accounting and inventory at the World Federation of UN Associates. Mark helps care for his grandmother who has end-stage dementia and does gardening for a former teacher who has cancer. Last but not least, he took a World Youth Day Pilgrimage to Portugal.

He plays flute in the school band and plays travel soccer for New Hyde Park. He was a member of the Hero Club, Chinese Club, and Open House. He was also a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, NYS Science and Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honor Societies. He received National Merit Scholarship Commendation, National Spanish Exam awards, Franciscan Service Scholarship Award, Principal's List throughout high school, and Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica.

He noted that one of the athletes named Liam opened his eyes and mind by doing things that he previously would not have. Now he finds joy in being a positive impact on those around him. He recieved a thank you note from Liam, which reminds him that personal success can be attained if he thinks of the people around him. Out of all the trophies and awards that sit on his bedroom trophy shelf, Liam's note that read: "Dear TJ thx you for helping me" is without a doubt the most valuable and life changing of all.

Mark will be atttending Mount Saint Mary College in the fall.

ADDIE MATTEI-IAIA PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP



In forty years of dedicating herself to youth soccer on Long Island, Addie Mattei-laia touched nearly every aspect of the game. It started in Smithtown, NY, where she coached and helped cofound the Smithtown Soccer Club. 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-laia served on the LIJSL Board of Directors for 18 years, and in 2004 she succeeded Peter Collins as President of the League and served for 12 years. She also served as Vice President on the Eastern New York Soccer Association Board of Directors.

Under her watch, the League's enrollment grew annually, and she increased sponsorships and revenues to support League programs like TOPSoccer, Scholarship, and Player Development Program as well as many more. Mattei-laia 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 Development 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. She also provided support to the families and soccer communities in need after 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy. In addition, she was instrumental in purchasing a new office facility for the League Office.

Current LIJSL President Andrew Seabury said, "There have been few people who have had such an impact on the Long Island soccer environment as Addie. You can be recognized for how you played the game, but equally we should recognize how we provide the environment for players to reach the heights of the beautiful game."

She is now the Chairperson of the LIJSL Hall of Fame.

Mattei-laia was inducted into the LIJSL Hall of Fame in 1996, inducted into the ENYYSA Hall of Fame in 2000, and named US Youth Soccer Region One Administrator of the Year in 2007.

She was honored at Red Bull Arena for her service to youth soccer and was instrumental in partnering with the Red Bull Academy Training Program in 2015. Officially launching the Regional Development School on Long Island, it has developed several professional players from Long Island.

Mattei-laia was inducted into the Long Island Soccer Player Hall of Fame and received the Paul LeSueur Ambassador of the Game Award in 2025.

RECIPIENT EMMA CROSS



Emma Cross graduated from Comsewogue High School and was a member of the soccer team for the past four years and also played lacrosse. She played her youth soccer for the Terryville Soccer Club and was coached by LIJSL Game Committee Chairman Tim Stalker.

She never backed down from a challenge and her philosophy is "Never say never because limits like fears are often just an illusion." Her dedication to her club team was unprecedented, according to Coach Stalker, who has had the privilege of coaching her since she was three years old. She also served as a junior trainer of the U11 team that Stalker also coaches. He said, "I have known Emma since she was three years old when she began playing soccer in Terryville's Intramural Program. It has been an amazing experience for me to watch Emma's first touches on the ball revolve into the strong player that she has become. Emma has had the love for the game since she was young."

With academics, she was a quick learner wanting to succeed in the classroom. Her math teacher Joel Sutherland said, "From the moment she entered my classroom, Emma displayed a keen enthusiasm for learning that set her apart from her peers. She approaches each lesson with a positive attitude and a willingness to tackle challenging concepts."

Cross will be playing on the Utica University women's soccer team and majoring in criminal justice and pyschology this fall.

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 EMILY LOVE



Emily Love graduated Babylon Junior-Senior High School, where she was a key member of the soccer team that earned Suffolk County Championships in 2023 and 2024, won the Long Island Championship in 2023 and were a finalist in 2024, as well as State Finalists in 2023. She was also a member of the basketball and spring track and field teams. She has played club soccer for the Babylon Soccer Club as the core of the team stayed together for almost a decade playing in LIJSL.

Her journey in the beautiful game has been extra special because her father, Stuart, coached both her high school and club teams. "He never gave me special treatment, in fact, if anything, he held me to a higher standard," she said about playing for her father. "At times, it was frustrating. But over time, I realized that he wasn't coaching me to be a better player, he was pushing me to be a better person." Stuart noted, "Spending time with my daughter on the soccer field and traveling to and from games and practices is something that I will always treasure. It is not always easy being the coach's child, but she handled it with grace. I say with great pride that she has taught me more than I could ever teach her."

Academically, Love was fifth in her graduating class, with a 102.7 GPA (weighted) and had a SAT score of 1430 and ACT score of 34. Her school counselor Hailey Tarkin said, "Emily's determination is unparalled; she is a young woman with a vision, and she wholeheartedly commits herself to her goals. Her academic prowess is second to none. She has consistently been at the top of her class, a testament to her intellectual curiosity and commitment to excellence."

The list of clubs and awards for her are countless. Love was Senior Class Cabinet Vice President, Leo Club Vice President, Student Council Publicist, DECA Club Publicist, Mock Trial Team Captain, and was an Empire Girls State Attendee. She also belonged to the National Honor Society, National English Honor Society, National Business Honor Society, National Science Honor Society, and the National Spanish Honor Society.

She will attend Providence College and major in political science this fall.

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 SAMANTHA SOLAR



Samantha Solar graduated from West Hempstead High School and accomplished a lot in a short period of time. She was a varsity player for three years, helping the school to win the first conference championship in over 10 years. Her impact on the field was recognized as she was awarded with All-Conference (10th and 11th grade) and All-County Honorable Mention (12th grade). Solar played club soccer for the West Hempstead Chiefs Soccer Club, where she has been a member of the club since 2011 and competed with one team during her LIJSL career.

On the field, Solar followed the motto that LIJSL stresses, "Building Character Through Soccer." She took it to heart and always tried to help others before taking time out for herself. She spent the last six years volunteering her time to work with West Hempstead TOPSoccer. Within the program, her role expanded to the point where she became a leader and the person that others would count on each weekend. Lauren Lee, West Hempstead TOPSoccer Director, noted an instance where Solar was working with a specific person in the program, saying, "Samantha was not just coaching soccer, she was interacting as a friend. It was heartwarming to see and a testament to Samantha's character."

She also collected books and volunteered with The Book Fairies, collecting over 2,500 books that were then distributed out to other organizations for others to enjoy.

In the classroom, Solar was in the top ten percent in her graduating class, as she had a 101.57 GPA. She was recognized as a Silver Chord Recipient, notching over 120 volunteer hours, and was also a member of the National Honor Society, STEM National Honor Society, and the Spanish Honor Society. She also participated in Athletes Helping Athletes.

Solar's future now leads her to the University of Scranton this fall.

RECIPIENT PETER UDILOVICH



Peter Udilovich graduated from W.C. Mepham High School, where he was a member of the varsity soccer team. He also played his club soccer with Bellmore PAL Soccer Club, where he along with two other players stayed together on the same team since 2016.

On the soccer field, he was always up for a challenge and consistently looked for ways to improve. One trait that made Udilovich very special is how he held himself accountable, never looking to place blame on others. His club coach Louis Cerrotta said, "Overall, Peter is an absolute pleasure to have on my roster. He is enthusiastic, dependable, and a high-level character player who brings so much to our team, both on and off the field. He is extremely responsible, knows what he wants and what he needs to get there, and isn't afraid to take ownership of both his play on the field and his scholastic studies."

In high school, he was awarded the Long Island Science Congress Meritorious Award, was an AP Scholar with Distinction, and was in the following honor societies: English, Science, Social Studies, Spanish, Math, and National Honor Society. He also played the tuba in school band and was a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society and participated in the NYSSMA Music Festival.

Udilovich will attend Cornell University to major in plant science this fall.



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.

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 SAMANTHA DONOVAN



Samantha Donovan graduated Massapequa High School and helped lead her team to a Nassau County Championship in 2023 and County Finalist in 2024. She also played for the Hicksville American Soccer Club since 2021 and previously played for the Massapequa Soccer Club. She also participated with the LIJSL Super Y team (2007 girls) in 2021 and 2022, reaching the Super Y National Finals in Tampa in December 2021.

She gave a lot of credit to her coach Bart Polster within the LIJSL Academy Program. She noted that under his guidance her confidence built up, which in turn, made her feel good about herself, which made her game reach another level. Feeling the appreciation of what she could bring to a team made her a more confident person on and off the soccer field. Her high-school coach Ronald Forman Jr. said, "Samantha Donovan is a role model for any student-athlete who strives for excellence. Her success can be measured not only through her efforts on the field, but also by her growth as a mature, active, original, and well-rounded individual."

In the classroom, Donovan focused on her academic studies and maintained a 95 GPA. Her school counselor Marianne McCormick said, "She does not relent when material becomes rigorous, as it only makes her more determined to succeed."

She will attend William Paterson University and continue her soccer career for the Pioneers this fall.

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 him 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, Gorman 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. He 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 DAVID SCALA



David Scala graduated from the Bronx High School of Science. He has played for several clubs in LIJSL, most recently with the New Hyde Park Wildcats Soccer Club (2023-2025). He also played for Little Neck Douglaston Youth Soccer Club (2022-2023) and Floral Park Soccer Club (2019-2022). He has also served as an assistant referee with LISRA since 2023.

Scala is a player that never backed down from a challenge, exemplified by his initiative to find a new squad to play with when his team disbanded. Florin Felix Nicolae, who coached Scala with Little Neck Douglaston, said, "During the time David played for Little Neck United, I experienced an individual who shows up earlier than asked, works hard, and carries himself in a polite, respectable manner. In addition, David is exceptionally gifted at making others feel comfortable and always maintaining a positive attitude."

For high school, Scala commuted each day from his home in Floral Park to the Bronx to attend the Bronx High School of Science. He excelled taking numerous AP classes and was a member of the National Honor Society and AP Scholar with Distinction, while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. He scored a 1480 overall on his SAT. He also excelled with piano, becoming NYSSMA certified in piano at level six, which is the highest level for collegiate and professional soloists.

His time on the field as an AR for the past three years led to personal growth. He took great pride in his improvement with communication, which was a skill he had difficulty with when younger.

He is headed to Boston University and will major in finance this coming fall.

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 until 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 their 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 ANDREW GRECO



Andrew Greco graduated from General MacArthur High School, where he was a member of the varsity soccer team for the past two years as well as participating in spring track and field. He played his youth soccer for the Levittown Soccer Club.

On the field, Greco has always been a leader. His coach with Levittown Michael Nemeth said, "Andrew's communication skills and focus on the task at hand displays his exceptional character and makes him a natural leader." His other coach Richard Mazzone added, "Andrew brings a strong sense of leadership and sportsmanship. He encourages others, leads by example, and maintains composure even in challenging moments."

During weekends, Greco assisted with the Soccer Stars program, where his main goal was to build confidence in the young players. He said, "I strive to provide the same support and confidence building opportunities that I wish I had when I was younger. With Soccer Stars, I am helping the kids score their own goals, both on and off the field."

In the classroom, he had a 99.1 GPA and an SAT score of 1440. His many academic awards included Renaissance Platinum Scholar, National Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, World Language Honor Society, and Math Honor Society. He was also a percussionist with the MacArthur Marching Band.

Greco's next steps lead him to Stony Brook University, where he will study civil engineering in the fall.

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 ITAI HERSHKO



Itai Hershko graduated from Oceanside High School and also played club soccer in his hometown.

On the field, he was a tireless worker, never backing down from a challenge, which were qualities he brought that made him the perfect teammate. Oceanside United coach Robert Minsky said, "Itai has been an invaluable member of our team, demonstrating remarkable dedication, skill, and leadership on and off the field. He is a teammate you could always count on - whether you needed motivation, support, or just a good laugh to lighten the mood."

In high school, Hershko excelled with a GPA of 3.8 and a SAT score of 1370. He was also a member of the National Honor Society, English Honor Society, and Social Studies Honor Society as well as earning AP Scholar with Distinction. He also produced and directed the short documentary film, "Making Sens-ory" (21 minutes, 2024). This short film was about his journey with ADHD and was recognized by the NYIS Film Festival and the Los Angeles Student Award Film Festival (2024 Finalist).

For the past few summers, he has given up time each day during the week to volunteer at Camp ANCHOR, which is for special-needs children and young adults in the Town of Hempstead at Point Lookout. Due to his dedication, he received an Excellent rating from the program.

Hershko will attend Indiana University in the fall and major in finance at the Kelley School of Business.

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.

Lombardo 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 GIULIA ZINGONE



Giulia Zingone graduated from Bethpage High School and earned varsity letters in soccer, flag football, winter and spring track. She was a member of the Bethpage PAL soccer club, winning the 2025 LI Cup U19 girls division. Giulia was also a member of the successful LIJSL PDP/LIJSL Academy program where she was a member of this program from 2018 to 2021.

On the field, Zingone has been able to slot into many different positions with her club team since starting at U10, where she developed into a key player. Her coach George Hsu said, "Giulia's greatest strength is her versatility, capable of playing any position on the field that the team needs of her. I can always count on Giulia to fill key positions due to other players' absenses."

Her academic career has also been impressive, finishing with a weighted GPA of 101.29. She was also a member of the National Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society, and the Tri-M Music Honor Society, as well as being in the Bethpage Gold Honor Roll. She also received a perfect score at level five at NYSSMA for Jazz Bass. Her school counselor Sean McSwiggan said, "Hardworking, passionate, and determined Giulia Zingone is a one-of-a-kind student who has envisioned her life's path and is working diligently toward achieving her goals. Giulia is a remarkable young lady who has left a lasting impact on our high school and our community."

Zingone will attend the University at Buffalo to study architechure in the fall.

LIJSL MERIT RECIPIENT NICK TONOREZOS



Nicholas Tonorezos graduated from Manhasset High School and was a member of the Manhasset Soccer Club for the past 10 years.

His time with Manhasset showcased his ability to work hard and also put the team before himself. He started out as a striker, but as he got older, he made the switch from scoring goals to stopping them as he became a goalkeeper. One special moment for him was being able to keep his team playing after the COVID-19 pandemic. With his team struggling witth a lack of returning players, he went out and found new teammates, which let the team continue on for the next few years. Tonorezos also had the opportunity to play for his father, Anastasios, who coached the team. He said about his son, "He has played because he loves the game. His growth as a soccer player was complemented by the exponential development of his interpersonal skills and teamwork, and thoughtfulness for his friends and community."

In the classroom, he always aimed to challenge himself. He took various AP classes and earned grades of A and A+ before scoring five's on the AP exam. He finished with a 3.587 GPA and achieved a 1510 on his SAT. Michael Faraci, a math teacher at Manhasset High School, said of Tonorezos, "While being a great student, Nick is also a great person. He is very well liked and respected by his peers and the faculty. He has a very 'chill' personality that allows him to get along with anyone."

Also, he has been involved with the Boy Scouts and completed his Eagle Scout Award. His final project to earn the honor saw him extending a trail (350 feet) within the Old Oak Pond Park by clearing the area to create a new trail and a set of stairs in an area with a steep elevation drop. To make this all come about, Tonorezos enlisted the help of 40 other Boy Scouts to assist him.

He will attend the University of Maryland at College Park this fall and is planning to study physics.

LIJSL MERIT RECIPIENT NICHOLAS GENNA



Nicholas Genna graduated from Oceanside High School, where he was a three-year varsity soccer player, earning All-Conference in 2024. He has also been a member of the Oceanside United Soccer Club, since U9, finishing up as one of two players that started with the team since its inception in LIJSL.

On the soccer field, Genna has had to overcome major challenges. It was discovered in ninth grade that he needed spinal surgery for scoliosis. Instead of making this an excuse to stop playing soccer which he loves, he had the surgery and was on the sidelines cheering his teammates on his club team and high school squad. In the meantime, he worked tirelessly in physical therapy to make the journey back to playing on the soccer field. He credited his mental toughness, saying, "My comeback was more than a return to the field. It was a testament to my growth as a person. I knew how to handle adversity, and the process taught me patience, humility, and how to truly appreciate the game I had sometimes taken for granted."

In the classroom, he also didn't fear challenges. His business education teacher Michelle C. Cinelli said, "Nicholas is currently in my College Introduction to Real Estate class and has been doing an amazing job. He sits right at the front (by choice!) and is engaged and participating in each lesson. He is always making sure his grades stay a top priority."

Genna is heading to St. John's University this fall.

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 Directos 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 Commitee, and Games Commitee.

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 emceeing 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 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 ALEX CERROTTA



Alex Cerrotta graduated from John F. Kennedy High School, where he played varsity soccer. He played club soccer with Bellmore PAL Soccer Club and also participated with LIJSL for three summers (2017-2019) in the PDP program.

One thing he took from his days playing in LIJSL was winning several sportsmanship awards and the philosophy that was instilled in him by his father and coach Louis. He said of his father, "He enforces good sportsmanship and celebrates winning the LIJSL Sportsmanship Award more than a cup victory. He is, and always will be, a role model to both me and my teammates." His other coach Stilianos Fotinos was always impressed by the hard work that Cerrotta brought to each practice and game. Even after two knee surgeries, those setbacks never put a damper on his love for the game. Fotinos said, "As a coach, I was concerned that his dream of playing varsity soccer his senior year may not come true. Alex was relentless though, he worked hard during training, he went running on his own, he asked me to train him privately to get in as much training as he could. Come senior year (2024) Alex made a talented roster and proved me wrong with doubts I had earlier that year."

In school, he enrolled in numerous AP classes, as well as being part of the John F. Kennedy High School band, serving as the principal tubist. He received numerous awards, including being a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, and Mathematics Honor Society.

When not playing himself, Cerrotta also found time to be on the field in other ways, acting as a referee for the Bellmore PAL intramural program on Sundays as well as helping out on Saturday afternoons with Bellmore PAL TOPSoccer.

He will attend Providence College this fall.

MATTHEW SCARPATI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Glory, Glory, Man United! His favorite team was Manchester United. It pained him greatly that his cousins are Chelsea fans. With his first nephew born on June 1, 2009, he looked forward to teaching him how to wear the appropriate jersey and cheer for the appropriate teams. That will never happen because a drunk and speeding motorcyclist left the Wantagh State Parkway, at approximately 100mph and collided with him while he was out for a bike ride and had stopped to fix a flat on the Wantagh State Bike Path. He attended the 2009 LIJSL Scholarship Awards on 7/19/09.

He is the youngest of four boys, all of whom played soccer. Soccer was a passport to many places from Italy and England to Maryland, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey. He was a 2008 graduate of Half Hollow Hills High School East and had completed a vigorous academic freshman year at the University at Buffalo. He made friends easily, but he always seemed to have a center compass. He loved all sports soccer, lacrosse, tennis, golf, basketball, and cycling. He made excellent choices in his friends.

Scarpati started with Northport Soccer Club, since they had a program for four-year-olds. He played travel for Northport, Brentwood United, Auburndale Supersonics, and East Meadow Jets. He was selected as an alternate for the ENYYSA ODP team and played with LIJSL ODP team. He played varsity soccer for Half Hollow Hills East and was a co-captain in his senior year. He played JV and varsity lacrosse as well. He wanted to play soccer in college. However, the schools that were thinking of him were not the schools he wanted to attend. A fractured and dislocated ankle in his senior year of high school made that decision a sound one. When he had completed two surgeries and physical therapy at the end of October 2008, he was able to play some intramural soccer at the University at Buffalo. He said he had forgotten how much he loved playing and he was determined to get back in the game, working out with a friend from his dorm.

He was an economics major at UB, loved Disney World, video games, music, fun, and cooking. Yet he could be serious about politics, faith, and fashion issues. He was a Renaissance Man. He was a Sunday evening regular at the UB Newman Center for mass and pledged Pi Lambda Phi. He was a wonderful blend of curiosity and generosity. He was a best friend to his family and friends. He had just finished reading "Liberty and Tyranny" and "The Three Musketeers" and had "Wealth of Nations" on deck for the next read. He was working as a doorman at 24 Gramercy Park South during the summer of 2009 and was enjoying the eclectic group of people that he met.

RECIPIENT OWEN SACKET



Owen Sacket graduated from Syosset High School and is a person that is a hard worker in everything he sets his mind to. A member of his high-school team and Syosset Soccer Club, he embodied the LIJSL motto of "Building Character Through Soccer" as he gave 110 percent in everything he has achieved on and off the field.

Throughout his soccer career, Sacket never took it for granted the opportunities he was given. His work at practices translated into much success as he was recognized as an All-Conference player this past season and was also honored by his team with the Senior Award. Sacket said, "Nothing was handed to me, and that is what shaped my character through soccer."

In the classroom, Sacket had an 8.269 GPA on an 8-point scale and earned a 1470 on his SAT. One of his greatest accomplishments in high school was that he never took a break from learning, taking each day as a new challenge. His science teacher Kristen Schneck said, "Moreover, even as many senior students begin to struggle during the "second semester slide," Owen has remained steadfast. His dedication to maintaining his academic performance amid a challenging period underscores his remarkable integrity and commitment. In a time when consistency can be hard to come by, he has proven himself as an outstanding student who rises above the norm."

Sacket now heads off to Indiana University and the Kelley School of Business this fall.

MICHAEL SCARPATI MEMORIAL GK SCHOLARSHIP



Born at 9 lbs. 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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 SOPHIA MCCORD



Sophia McCord graduated from Smithtown East High School, where she was a four-year varsity soccer player. She also played club soccer with Stony Brook/LGN.

McCord developed into a very talented goalkeeper, and the position gave her a perspective about being a leader and how to interact with others. She noted in her essay how being a goalkeeper taught her accountability and resiliency. While getting scored on was tough for her, her dad always reminded her that it had to get by 10 other players on the team first. With her love of soccer and her talents in goal, she will continue to play on the collegiate level at SUNY ESF. There she will join up with Taylor Weber (2023 LIJSL Scholarship Recipient) on the roster.

In the classroom, McCord took a very grueling schedule head on, always challenging herself to do well. That ethos paid off as she consistently received an A or an A+ for her final grades for the school year. As well as top grades, she was a member of the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, French Honor Society, and was part of Rho Kappa.

One of her main interests is with environmental science and the outdoors, and this created a bond with one of her classroom teachers, Kathryn Re-Yakaboski, who was her honors earth science teacher. She said, "Sophia is highly motivated, highly intelligent, and combined with a passion for the outdoors any college would benefit from having Sophia at their campus."

She will continue her passion for soccer and the environment at SUNY ESF this fall.

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

RECIPIENT JACK VISNIUS



Jack Visnius graduated from Smithtown West High School, where he was a three-year starter for varsity soccer. He was the team's captain in his senior year and also earned two All-League Awards during his high-school career. His team also won two consecutive County Championships and also earned the Long Island Championship in 2023. He played club soccer with hometown clubs, the Smithtown Kickers and Smithtown Long Island Slammers.

On the field, he has been a leader from an early age. He grew up around several individuals involved in soccer, which helped shape his character, passion, and love for the game. His grandfather was a past club president of Commack Soccer League, his grandmother played until she was 50, both his parents played on the collegiate level, and his sisters are enthusiastic players of the game.

His success on the soccer field is also a result of his tireless work ethic. His high-school coach Robert Schretzmayer said, "Having the pleasure of mentoring Jack though soccer all of these years, and seeing his progress through the triumphs and defeats, to true self awareness and the humility that comes with it was nothing short of inspiring. The message was simple. Put the work in. And be yourself. And he has been putting the work in ever since he was five years old and he is the definition of a coach's player of the highest integrity and character. I am very proud of Jack."

During his time in high school, Visnius had a GPA of 4.21. He also earned numerous awards including: National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Rho Kappa (Social Studies Honor Society), Math Honor Society, School of Business Honor Society, and finally being a part of DECA. He also received AP Scholar with Distinction for all of his hard work in the classroom. One person that was quite amazed by all of this was his school counselor Sara Stone. She said, "Between his rigorous academic schedule and the time he dedicates to his commitments, it amazes me that he can accomplish everything he has. He is a student that truly understands his own academic abilities and through his time in high school he has become an independent, confident, and driven student, one that I am extremely proud of."

He will attend the University of South Carolina this coming fall.

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 OSCAR DALTON



Oscar Dalton graduated from Floral Park Memorial High School, where he helped lead his school to the New York State Championship (Class A) in 2024. As the goalkeeper, he only allowed 13 goals during the entirety of the campaign. He also played for the Floral Park Soccer Club.

Dalton didn't start his soccer career in goal. After an injury in the sixth grade to the team's regular goalkeeper, he stepped up to the challenge. While it took time to adjust to the new position, his dedication to learning the craft never wavered, spending countless hours trying to improve. Dalton finally got his opportunity to shine this past year, culminating in the State Title, after spending the two previous seasons as the backup.

In the classroom, he earned a weighted GPA of 99.89, an ACT score of 35, and membership to several honor societies. They included the National Honor Society, World Language Honor Society, National English Honor Society, National Music Honor Society (Tri-M), National Math Honor Society, and National Social Studies Honor Society. For the past two years he was also a part of the Principal/Superintendent's Advisory Board and Breakfast Club, working with younger students with troubled backgrounds and learning disabilities.

Dalton is headed to Swarthmore College this fall, where he will double major with a focus on linguistics and computer science.

RECIPIENT MICHAEL DONOVAN



Michael Donovan graduated from Floral Park High School, where he became a New York State Champion (Class A) in 2024. He also played with the Floral Park Soccer Club.

In soccer, he has been a player that has improved each year through hard work and dedication. He was his high-school team's most improved player in 2022, named All-Conference in Class A for 2023, and then was recognized in the preseason in Newsday Top 100 soccer players on Long Island for 2024, finishing the year as an All-County Honorable Mention Class A. With his club team, it was a seamless fit into the squad since he joined the team in 2022. His club coach Liam Guilfoyle said, "He is a coach's dream player and I do not say that lightly. The soccer skills Michael possesses on the field pale in comparison to the inner skills that no coach can teach."

He tackled his academics with just as much dedication, achieving a GPA (weighted) of 100.176 and was awarded AP Scholar with Distinction after taking numerous AP courses throughout his time in high school. He also earned a five on the AP World History Exam and a four on the AP European History Exam. He was also involved in Mathletes and Model UN.

He will attend SUNY Binghamton in the fall.

RECIPIENT AVERY WHITEHOUSE



Avery Whitehouse graduated from Sacred Heart Academy, where she won a State Championship in 2023. She played her entire club career with Lynbrook/East Rockaway.

Whitehouse's true love of soccer saw her often on the field, working on her craft as a defender. Her efforts rubbed off on her teammates, which helped create bonds with some of her current best friends. She credits soccer for teaching her very valuable lessons that will last a lifetime, including confidence, compassion, discipline, and to be proud of her character.

In school, she achieved a 92.72 GPA and accumulated 32 credits during her four years. Her english teacher Monique Hernandez said, "Avery is well-liked by her peers, I have witnessed her interactions with friends. She always has a kind word for everyone and is there to help when needed. She strives to give no less than her best to her studies, her teachers, her friends, and classmates."

She will attend Penn State University this coming fall.

PAT GRECCO SCHOLARSHIP



Pat Grecco is the quintessential volunteer and LIJSL players, parents, and leadership have often been the beneficiaries. Grecco 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.

Grecco 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. Grecco 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.

Grecco 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, Grecco 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 MAURA REILLY



Maura Reilly graduated from Sayville High School and was a three-year member of the varisty soccer team. Her team reached the Suffolk County Championship in 2024. She also excelled in other sports, including playing two seasons of varsity basketball and being recognized as a top golfer in Suffolk by Newsday. She played her club soccer with the East Islip Soccer Club.

Reilly was known as a fierce competitor never stepping back from a challenge and always looking to make herself a better player on the field. Her club coach Ross Burns said, "The LIJSL Scholarship is supposed to be awarded to players that exemplify the character that LIJSL was founded upon. Those traits are the value of hard work, discipline, responsibility and team work. In all my years of coaching soccer, not one player has demonstrated these traits better than Maura."

She was in the RISE Technology Honors Program in high school and earned an award from the Long Island Science Congress for her RISE Tech project. Her project saw her develop a cleat cleaner for athletes to use when cleats get muddy and have dirt stuck in them. Her other awards consisted of being a member of the National Honor Society, World Language Honor Society, and Rho Kappa (Social Studies). She also was involved with Athletes Helping Others (AHO), Key Club, SWEEP (Students Working to Enable Environmental Protection), and Youth Activation Committee (YAC).

She will head to Stetson University to major in marketing with a sports business minor this fall.

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 currenly 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.

Collins passed away December 2018 at the age of 87.

RECIPIENT DANA SCRUGGS



Dana Scruggs graduated from Bethpage High School, where she played varsity soccer for five seasons and captained the team in her senior year. She also earned varsity letters in basketball and lacrosse. She played her club soccer with the Hicksville American Soccer Club.

Her club team performed as one of the top teams in Easern New York, and Scruggs' leadership played a major role in that. The trainer of the team Michael Branker said, "Very rarely do you have a player who you will never forget. Dana is one of those players. She is inquisitive and always searching for ways to improve. She makes you improve as a coach to ensure you can keep up with her development."

Her academic performance was equally as excellent. She had a 3.99 GPA for her four years and took a numerous amount of AP courses. Her strong performance in the classroom landed her a member of the Golden Honor Roll, National Honor Society, and National Science Honor Society. She also came in first place in the Irish Cultural Society of Garden City writing competition in 2022. Her school counselor James Benjamin, who worked closely with Scruggs during her time in high school, said, "Dana has excelled in her coursework while balancing a demanding schedule of extracurricular activities and athletic commitments. Her teachers consistently praise her maturity, work ethic, and the respect she commands from her peers. Dana approaches every challenge with a quiet determination and a desire to do her best."

She will continue her education and soccer career at SUNY Cortland this fall.

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 PATRICK HIMMEL



Patrick Himmel graduated from John F. Kennedy High School, and he participated with the soccer and track and field teams. He played his club soccer with the Bellmore PAL Soccer Club.

On the field, Himmel was known to lead the team each week with his actions and not words. His club coach Lou Cerrotta said, "Patrick has grown into what I would consider a 'silent leader', he is a quiet game manager who isn't very vocal and does not yearn for the spotlight. He is so willing and agreeable that he commands the respect of the entire team and demands that they respect the game the way he does."

In the classroom, he was a tireless worker. He was a member of the World Language Honors Society as well as the National Honor Society. His teacher Sara Gant was impressed with the way he would give up his lunch period to stop by her classroom to get assistance with calculus. She said, "Patrick Himmel the student can be described as motivated and perseverant. Patrick Himmel the person can be defined as humble and committed. When you look at the entire package you see a well put together young man."

He was also involved with Camp ANCHOR, volunteering his summers at Point Lookout to assist with special-needs children and young adults to make their summer an enjoyable experience. He also volunteered with Bellmore PAL TOPSoccer this past year.

He will attend SUNY Cortland this coming fall.

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 JADYN HSU



Jadyn Hsu graduated from Bethpage High School, where she was a five-year varsity soccer player. She also was a member of the basketball, winter and spring track teams. With Bethpage PAL Soccer Club, she suited up for both girls and boys teams on the weekend.

Success came early and often for Hsu on the field. This past season in high school, she had 27 goals and nine assists, earning a spot on Newsday's All-Long Island team. She was also recognized in the paper's Top 100 players for her junior and senior years. Hsu was featured on Channel 12 News in October '24 as the scholar-athlete of the month and also earned the Sue Link Memorial Award. Her club team recently won the LI Cup (U19) and took first place this past spring in the LIJSL U19 Premier Division. The very first award her team won was the LIJSL Sportsmanship Award at U10 in the fall 2016 season.

As with her on the field play, academics also brought much success. She had a 106.3 GPA (weighted) and an ACT score of 32. She was also a member of the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society (President), National World Language Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, and the Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society. Finally, she was an AP Scholar with Distinction. Her chemistry teacher Kelly Flanagan said, "Her work ethic far surpasses that of her peers and combined with her natural intelligence, will help her meet any challenge in the future. Jadyn's leadership skills and instinct to help others are qualities that are truly evident in every conversation with her. She has made an incredible impact on the Bethpage community."

She will continue her studies and soccer career close to home at Hofstra University with a focus on excercise physiology on a pre-med track.

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 IYOSHUA BAXTER



lyoshua Baxter graduated from Valley Stream South High School, where he captained the team his senior season and was an All-Conference player. For the past five years, he has also been a member of the Hewlett Lawrence Soccer Club and previously played for his dad in the Valley Stream Soccer Club.

When he arrived at the Hewlett Lawrence Soccer Club in 2020, the club was unable to field teams in the 2007 or 2006 age groups. Baxter, however, was undeterred. He took on the challenge to play two years up with the 2005 team. He played with the team the next three years until 2023 before the bulk of the squad aged out and headed off to college. By this point, the club had enough players for Baxter's age, so he made the transition back to playing against athletes his own age for the last two seasons. His club coach for that 2005 squad Christopher Albanese said, "Iyo loves soccer. He loves to play it, talk it, and even teach it. He is a true ambassador of the game." His high school coach Peter Mastrota also had a glowing review of Baxter. Mastrota said, "Iyoshua has been a dependable model of hard work, grit, enthusiasm, and commitment the entire season. In soccer we play eleven boys a side. If I could, I would play eleven lyo's."

Baxter's tenacity was also evident in the classroom. He was consistently on the school honor roll for each quarter and took classes that would challenge him to prepare for college. Mastrota, who also was his American history teacher, added, "lyoshua Baxter is a model student. His work is exemplary. Iyoshua Baxter epitomizes the 'student is a pleasure to have in class' comment. I would love to teach a class with 30 lyo's in it."

He will attend SUNY North County Community College to focus on studying entrepreneurial management this fall.

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 CHRISTINE LOMBARDI



Christine Lombardi graduated from West Islip High School, and she was a member of the varsity soccer team for four years. She also was a member of the cheerleading squad and softball team for which she was recognized in Newsday as a Top 100 player. She played her club soccer for the West Islip Soccer Club and volunteered to help the club in any role needed on the weekends. She also became a LISRA Referee, which she has been doing since March 2020.

Lombardi was a leader on her high-school team, serving as a captain, in a year filled of many successes. West Islip won the 2024 Suffolk County Championship and Long Island Championship. She was also recognized with the All-League Academic Award by the Suffolk County Soccer Coaches Association.

When some students may take it easy for senior year, Lombardi was firmly on the opposite side. In the first three months of the school year she earned several honors, including September Business Student of the Month (SUNY Farmingdale College Sports Management), November Business Student of the Month (Long Island University College Accounting) and November Science of the Month (STEM Research). She was also a member of the National Honor Society (Historian), Science National Honor Society, World Language National Honor Society, and the Mu Alpha Theta (Math National Honor Society). She also participated in the STEM Academy Program and was the only female in her graduating class as well as one of only six students to graduate the program this year.

Lombardi will continue her studies at Siena College this fall and focus on accounting.

COLLEGE ATTENDING

NAME

lyoshua Baxter

Alex Cerrotta

Emma Cross

Oscar Dalton

Michael Donovan

Samantha Donovan

Jonah Drew

Nicholas Genna

Andrew Greco

Itai Hershko

Patrick Himmel

Jadyn Hsu

Manal Layachi

Christine Lombardi

CLUB

Hewlett/Lawrence

Bellmore PAL

Terryville

Floral Park

Floral Park

Hicksville

Rockville Centre

Oceanside

Levittown

Oceanside

Bellmore PAL

Bethpage

Valley Stream

West Islip

HIGH SCHOOL

Valley Stream South HS

John F. Kennedy HS

Comsewogue HS

Floral Park Memorial HS

Floral Park Memorial HS

Massapequa

South Side HS

Oceanside HS

MacArthur HS

Oceanside HS

John F. Kennedy HS

Bethpage HS

Valley Stream North HS

West Islip HS

COLLEGE ATTENDING

SUNY North County CC

Providence College

Utica University

Swarthmore College

Binghamton University

William Paterson University

Syracuse University

St. John's University

Stony Brook University

Indiana University

SUNY Cortland

Hofstra University

St. John's University

Siena College

COLLEGE **ATTENDING**

NAME

Emily Love

Thomas Mark

Sophia McCord

Maura Reilly

Owen Sacket

David Scala

Dana Scruggs

Samantha Solar

Nicholas Tonorezos

Peter Udilovich

Jack Visnius

Avery Whitehouse

Giulia Zingone

CLUB

Babylon

New Hyde Park

Stony Brook/LGN

East Islip

Syosset

New Hyde Park

Hicksville

West Hempstead

Manhasset

Bellmore PAL

Smithtown

Lynbrook/East Rockaway Sacred Heart Academy

Bethpage

HIGH SCHOOL

Babylon HS

Saint Francis Preparatory

Smithtown East HS

Sayville HS

Syosset HS

Bronx HS Of Science

Bethpage HS

West Hempstead HS

Manhasset HS

Wellington C. Mepham HS

Smithtown West HS

Bethpage HS

COLLEGE ATTENDING

Providence College

Mount Saint Mary College

SUNY ESF

Stetson University

Indiana University

Boston University

SUNY Cortland

University Of Scranton

University Of Maryland

Cornell University

University Of South Carolina

Penn State University

University At Buffalo

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Andrew Seabury

Michael D'Ambrosio

Matt Power

Pedro Contreras

Jose Alarcon

Michael Longo

Gina Tucker

"The Future Belongs To Those Who Believe In The

Beauty Of Their Dreams."

-Eleanor Roosevelt





LONG ISLAND JUNIOR SOCCER LEAGUE

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