

Retired Educators announce 2020 scholarship winners

Towns County Retired Educators Association (TCREA) is committed to promoting and fostering excellence in education for Towns County. One of the ways they support excellence is by providing two scholarships for students from Towns County seeking a degree in education and current teachers living or working in Towns County. TCREA is pleased to announce the winners of their 2020 scholarships.

The winner of the TCREA Emerging Educator Scholarship is Sara Beth Hobbs from Hiawassee. The Emerging Educator Scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate student who is a legal resident of Towns County, a declared education major, and at least a junior by the fall semester of the year in which the scholarship is awarded. They must have at least a 3.0 GPA and be in good academic standing with their college or university.

Sara Beth is a graduate of Towns County High School and was Valedictorian of her graduating class in 2018. She attends the University of North Georgia and is Majoring in Middle Grades Education. She is a member of the national honor society and is on the Dean's List at UNG. In addition to her studies, Sara Beth has volunteered at the Towns County Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, and the Hiawassee Animal Hospital and is a member of Macedonia Baptist Church. Sara Beth's goal is to be the kind of teacher who will inspire her students to find a passion for learning as her



Sara Beth Hobbs

own teachers did for her.

The winner of the TCREA Advanced Degree Scholarship is Kim McClure from Hiawassee. The Advanced Degree Scholarship is awarded to an applicant who holds a current teaching certificate and is enrolled in, or accepted into, an accredited advanced degree program in education during the year in which the scholarship is awarded. They must have at least a 3.0 GPA and be in good academic standing with their college or university and must be a legal resident of Towns County or employed at a school in Towns County.

Kim currently teaches Kindergarten at Towns County Elementary School where she serves a lead teacher, a member of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Team, and the Wellness Team. She is pursuing an Educational Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Pied-



Kim McClure

mont University. She holds a bachelor's in Early Childhood Education from Truett McConnell University where she was on the President's list every semester while attending, and a master's in Early Childhood Education from Piedmont University. She has been recognized as a VFW Teacher of the Year, has represented the Kindergarten on the Student Council, volunteers with the Running Club, and is a member of Mt. Pleasant Church of God. Kim strives to promote, fairness, cooperation, empathy, and problem solving for her students to help them reach their full potential.

TCREA is pleased to recognize and reward Sara Beth Hobbs and Kim McClure as they work toward their educational goals and wishes them every success. For more information on TCREA, their activities, and future scholarship opportunities, please email TCREA.SC@gmail.com.

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EMA Director Walls speaks to Rotary Club virtual meeting

The Lake Chatuge/Hiawassee Rotary Club continued its regular weekly meetings via the Zoom virtual meeting platform on Tuesday, June 2nd with a meeting featuring a guest presentation by Towns County Emergency Management Agency Director Brandon Walls. Brandon was appointed to his position in June 2019 after serving in management positions as a law enforcement officer, paramedic and firefighter, and holds a range of certifications in search and rescue, advanced cardiac, trauma, and pediatric life support, in addition to tactical emergency casualty care qualifications.

Brandon gave an overview of the Towns County response to the COVID 19 pandemic, including the county's successful procurement early on of 1500 N-95 masks, as well as good quantities of other personal protective apparel for healthcare personnel, a significant quantity of disinfection solutions, and a fogging system used to sanitize polling locations and local healthcare offices. While some training of his department was curtailed because of the virus, there were special training sessions conducted for several potential adverse events.

Rotarians asked several questions about the current situation with the coronavirus. Brandon indicated that as of that Tuesday, there were 24 reported cases of COVID in Towns County residents, with a definite flattening of the curve in recent weeks. He indicated that contact tracing had shown that most recent cases have been the result of "community spread", rather than being due to attendance at any large events.

Brandon reported that

tests for COVID 19 are now available two days a week (Tuesdays and Fridays) at the Towns County Health Department and require a referral from a physician. The recent number of tests being conducted at the facility have been in the 50-75 per day range, so the great majority of those tested are negative.

The Lake Chatuge/Hiawassee Club is one of more

than 35,000 Rotary Clubs all over the world. The local club meets each Tuesday at noon, usually at the Brasstown Resort, but for now the meetings are virtual on Zoom.

If you are interested in being part of an organization whose motto is "Service Above Self," call John Scott, Membership Committee Chair, at 239-248-5161. TUJun10.F21SH

Local students named to President's and Dean's List at Young Harris College

Young Harris College President Drew L. Van Horn, Ph.D., is pleased to announce that the following students have been named to the College's President's List for the spring 2020 semester. Students who achieve a 4.0 grade point average or better are eligible to be named to the President's List.

Students on the YHC spring 2020 President's List are: Jennifer Ellis, Sarah Faneuff, Emma Hambrick, April Land, Carli LeJeune, Julia Lindsey, Alyssa McFarland, Madeline Studebaker, of Blairsville; Courtney Giles of Hiawassee; Benjamin Edwards, Samuel Gaston, Amber Gibson, Alexandra Settles of Young Harris.

The following students

have been named to the College's Dean's List for the spring 2020 semester. Students who achieve a 3.5 grade point average or better are eligible to be named to the Dean's List.

Local students include: Marena Brown, Jacob Burgess, Zachary Burns, Sarah Dills, Alexis Doutrich, Jonathan Everett, Katelynn Hodges, Hunter Kelley, Cole Payne, Jonathon Reeves, Brianna Shope, Brittany Spivey, Mary Thigpen of Blairsville; Chloe Spears, Bella Rose Wilson of Hiawassee; and Alyssa Bantum, Wesley Calhoun, Zandra Churchill, Parker Daniel, Dixie Landress, Dylan Roberts, Andrew Rogers, Carly Woodard, Katelin Margard of Young Harris. NTUJun10.Z12/CA

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Stan Chastain, right, and Tamie Bradley made sure to social distance with the rest of their fellow school board members on June 1. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

minimal to moderate spread, and low to no spread, with Towns County falling into the low to no spread. For that category, that is starting school traditionally with students in the building.

"Obviously, there are some guidelines in there for social distancing, but you can still go to the cafeteria. The first guidelines a few weeks ago were saying that kids couldn't go to the cafeteria, they would have to bring lunches into the classroom - kids couldn't change classes. At least they have gone through and said that not all schools are the same and not all counties are the same."

Superintendent Berrong also brought up athletics and how the system will move forward in preparation for the year.

"They have approved for conditioning to begin on June 8," Berrong said. "But you cannot have sport-specific items. You can't have a football to throw back and forth, you can't shoot a basketball and share a basketball - you can't even throw a baseball back and forth."

"I expect that to change

because that came out the week before (Gov. Brian) Kemp came out and said Little League baseball can start, so that might change here in a little while. Right now, on June 8, high school kids are allowed to come to the weight room and work out under certain guidelines."

The school system is still planning on having a graduation for the Class of 2020 on July 31, with more details to come as the schools receive more information from the state.

"Our school nutrition fund has been declining over the past couple of years, part of that due to the loss of students in our system and students who do not participate in the program," Berrong said. "Looking at the budgets and the numbers, (School Nutrition Director Becky Lusk) is requesting a 35-cent increase to school lunches for students."

"Full-pay students K-5 would be \$2.35, and full-pay 6-8 will be \$2.45, and asking for the same 35-cent increase for staff and visitor meals. That would put staff meals at \$3.80 and visitor meals at \$4.35."

"She also included a sheet that shows the total cost

for an October meal, which was \$2.66, which is still more than what the student was paying for that meal, and the March meal costs us \$4.77. So, there are some things they need to look at as well to keep their costs down."

School board members questioned the difference in prices every month, which Berrong explained was due to the menu.

"The costs per month all depends on what you are serving," Berrong said. "For example, if you are serving bacon, bacon is extremely expensive over top some other products. It depends on what you are actually serving that puts those prices up and down."

The board decided not to increase the costs of visitor meals due to the few numbers of visitors the school system serves each year.

Also during the meeting, board members approved a spending resolution for the month of July, since they cannot set up a budget until the statewide budget is set.