

Martin Mackey Scholarships - 2024

1. Student Name - Aidan Conley, Freeport

Participation in Endeavor program: He moved into the program in the middle of 10th grade after struggling to pass his classes. Endeavor gave him the confidence he needed to pursue further education. He is currently a volunteer firefighter in Pownal. The growth he has demonstrated over his time in high school is immense. He seeks me out for assistance with college materials because he is eager to take on this next level of education. I would not have called that his freshman year! Aidan will be going on to Southern Maine Community College to pursue Fire Science. Alternative Ed changed his high school experience completely, he and his family are both very grateful.

2. Student Name - Alexis Foss, Machias

I am writing to provide a nomination for the Martin Mackey Scholarship for Alexis Foss. Alexis has been accepted to Southern Maine Community College to pursue a degree in liberal studies with a concentration in art. She is also interested in the human service field. As a school counselor at Machias Memorial High School, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Alexis over the past four years and have witnessed her journey through significant challenges to achieve her high school diploma.

Alexis is a kind, warm and thoughtful young woman, who truly wants to do well in school and ultimately, make the world a better place. Unfortunately, Alexis struggled with attendance, which often hindered her academic progress and overall performance. After two years in the traditional high school setting, MMHS offered Alexis the chance to move to our alternative education program where she made slow and steady improvements.

Alexis has consistently demonstrated a strong interest in art and also in the field of health and human services. Facing her own adversities, she is sympathetic to others facing challenges and would like to help others. Art has consistently been a source of comfort for Alexis and I could envision a future where she combines her two interests to help others.

During her time at Machias Memorial High School, Alexis showed growth in both her personal and academic life. She has gradually improved her attendance and has shown an improved commitment to completing her assignments and projects. This perseverance has been a crucial factor in her ability to graduate high school. While I recognize that Alexis still faces challenges, as do all students making the transition from high school to college, I believe that the supportive and structured environment at Southern Maine Community College will provide her with the opportunity to continue her progress.

Alexis's journey has been far from easy, but her determination make her a deserving candidate for your scholarship. I am hopeful that Alexis will be successful as she moves on to this next phase of her life.

3. Student Name - Gavin Howie, Windham HS

The Katahdin Program would like to nominate Katahdin graduating Senior Gavin Howie for the Martin Mackey Memorial Scholarship. Gavin intends to move to Norridgewock and enroll at the Kennebec Valley Community College in Fairfield to pursue licensure as an Electrical Line worker. Gavin is an alternative learner who in just one year at Katahdin has blossomed from a very quiet and reserved student into a motivated student leader who has mapped out a future that he intends to create for himself. Gavin has grown tremendously and developed his voice as a learner. Gavin is a physically gifted student who excels at skateboarding, skiing, and other outdoor pursuits. Gavin shares Martin's Makey's love of "human-powered transportation" and he can often be found on a bike, skateboard or with a backpack on climbing up a mountain.

4. Student Name - Riley Tibbetts, Skowhegan

Riley Tibbetts is a senior who joined our program mid way through her Freshman year. She grew from a nervous student that could not even order her own meal at a fast food restaurant, into an amazing beekeeper, an extraordinary student and has even earned a principal award through the regular high school due to her welcoming nature, acceptance and civic work. She is graduating with honors and has completed three college courses in her senior year. She is the first in her family to graduate high-school and she is already almost a semester ahead in college! She also works 25 hours a week at Dunkin Donuts and held her job for most of this year. We are so proud of her accomplishments, and I am even more excited that she will be living on campus at SMCC and working toward a career as a special education teacher! I can not think of a student that I would support getting aid to help in her future education.

5. Student Name - Kai Voye, Brewer

We'd like to nominate Kai Voye, senior with the Nu program at Brewer. He's an insanely driven student--has taken 6 AP courses online and done well. But this year, Kai's true self shined best as a volunteer in my classroom every Wednesday and Thursday as we worked to build our middle school alternative education program. I quite literally could not have done it without him. He is consistent, kind, knowledgeable, and my students adore him. In November when our program grew from 9 students to 24 students Kai arrived every Wednesday and Thursday and was a huge reason that our students continued to thrive and come to school excited to be here! Kai hopes to pursue some college classes in the fall at EMCC and will need money for books as his family has no extra income to help him pursue this. He will undoubtedly thrive and do well as he pursues some sort of career in the field of science. We would LOVE Kai to receive this scholarship to help with any extra costs of pursuing a post-secondary education.

6. Student Name - Ann Prickett, Waterville

I am pleased to nominate Ann Prickett for the Martin Mackey Memorial Scholarship. Ann has been accepted to the Maine College of Art BA program. I have been her art teacher for three years and have enjoyed watching her transform into a talented, dedicated, and hard-working artist. In addition to her artistic talents, Ann has gone over and above as a strong advocate for the Waterville Alternative Education program, including getting out of her comfort zone to speak in front of community members.

Ann is mature beyond her years as a young woman who has intuitively used the healing power of art to help her process trauma and hardship from her past. Her subject matter vexes many of her peers and other high school instructors and is problematic for many to engage with. Despite this, I admire her desire and commitment to raising awareness of issues of violence against women.

In addition to maintaining a full academic course load each school year, Ann has engaged in numerous extracurricular art programs. She is regarded as a peer among the local Central Maine art community. She has actively participated in an after-school art course Colby College and MidMaine Adult Education offered for two years. This 15-week community course comprises a cohort of adult community members, artists, and other high school students. Ann was actively engaged with groups beyond her peers and thrived in this creative atmosphere.

Additionally, Ann regularly attends the SLICE program. SLICE (Students Learning Innovative Creative Endeavors) is a multidisciplinary arts education and engagement program that encourages students ages 13-18 to explore the Waterville area's unique, high-quality arts and cultural career-based programs. Ann's dedication to her community is evident in her advocacy and volunteer work. She was invited to speak at local public events to support the Waterville Alternative High School program.

Ann has volunteered her time every year, including selling her art to raise funds for local families in need, demonstrating her commitment to positively impacting her community. In looking ahead to Ann's college years, I am sure she is ready to tackle the rigorous and challenging curriculum at the collegiate level. She will immerse herself in her new community and share her energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and talent with her peers and professors.

Ann exemplifies what Alternative students can achieve when encouraged to aim high. Attending a top-notch private school is intimidating for her, especially when considering affording this kind of education. I know she would be eternally grateful for any financial support and would continue to advocate for Alternative education for the rest of her life.

7. Student Name - Ayla Gayton, Gray-New Gloucester

I would like to nominate Ayla Gayton. She came to our program as a very credit deficient sophomore, with very low self esteem and at great risk of dropping out. Here is where she found "her people", a way to show her knowledge, and that amazing feeling of success. She worked very hard and earned 7.5 credits and was accepted into the Early Childcare program at Portland Arts & Technology High School (PATHS) for her junior & senior years. Her family has relied heavily on her to help with younger siblings, as well as financially. Ayla has an incredible work ethic and has had a job since she was able to get a job permit and work. She has earned several accolades from PATHS: student of the month, chosen to attend a summer program @UNE, as well as completing all her certifications and courses for a behavior health professional (BHP). This young lady has had to grow up and take on many "adult responsibilities" as a high school student, and her eagerness to learn has made teaching her extremely gratifying. This scholarship would not only help her financially, Ayla is a "true alternative ed student"! One that Martin Mackey would have loved to teach and see blossom into a young professional early childhood EDUCATOR!! Thank you for doing this scholarship! Ayla Gayton, Gray- New Gloucester High School Class of 2024, She will be attending Central Maine Community College, Liberal Studies Program

8. Student Name - Kamdynn Hardgrove, Presque Isle

I am honored to nominate my student Kamdynn Hardgrove for the Martin Mackey scholarship. Kam is a graduating senior. He has been through many setbacks in his personal life. He has had to navigate his education while being homeless, living in a household with addiction, food insecurity, and poverty. In spite of all of this, Kam is the kid that will do anything for others. He helps the community with their events including the Balloon Festival, delivering food to the needy, and most impressively, he has worked for the Chamber of Commerce for their holiday light parade. His 9th grade year, this kid walked 3 miles to help build the Santa float, and it was 5 degrees with below 0 winds. I made sure that never happened again. That is the perfect example of what he will do to be a part of the community. He als has been a member of Presque Isle High Band for 4 years and has not missed an obligation.

He will be attending Northern Maine Community College for Welding in the fall.