



Press Contact:

[Laurie Pepitone](#)

Director of Marketing and Communications
Morris Educational Foundation
(973) 683-0767

MORRIS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION PRESENTS SCHOLARSHIPS TO 38 MORRISTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

\$635K Awarded at Senior Awards Night

Morristown, NJ (July 15, 2026) – With the 2025-2026 school year completed, the [Morris Educational Foundation](#) (MEF) is proud to announce it has awarded a record-breaking \$635,000 in scholarships to support the academic pursuits of 38 outstanding Morristown High School seniors. The MEF, a non-profit organization enhancing excellence in education in the Morris School District for over 33 years, honored the deserving students during the high school's scholarship award night on June 10.

The **thirty-eight students received scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000**. This year, three students received full-ride scholarships to attend Rutgers University, thanks to the incredibly generous Steinberg Family (Robert Steinberg – Class of 1969, Julian Steinberg – Class of 1973, and Andy Steinberg – Class of 1975), who funded the three Judy and Eliot Steinberg Scholarships in memory of their parents. One student will also attend Seton Hall University with a \$100,000 scholarship, thanks to the generosity of MHS Class of 1939 high school sweethearts Carl George and Shirley L. Eklund, who endowed a legacy to benefit generations of students.

MEF scholarships are funded by donors who choose to invest in the future of Morris School District students by creating a named scholarship. Many scholarship donors are alumni who want to celebrate their experience at Morristown High School, and others choose to honor a family member. Several MEF scholarships were established as a part of bequests.

This year, the MEF added four new scholarships to its portfolio.

- The **Colonial Cancer Foundation Scholarship** was established by a group of Morristown High School alumni who lost their fathers to cancer and was awarded to a student who has battled cancer or whose parents, caregivers, or siblings have battled or lost the battle to cancer.
- The **Charles D. Seligson Scholarship** was established in his memory by his wife and was awarded to a student pursuing a career in STEM.
- The **Christopher L. Martin Scholarship** was established by his wife in his memory and was awarded to a student pursuing a career in STEM.
- The **Jeff Leloia Scholarship** was established by friends and family of Jeff Leloia, in his memory. It was awarded to a student-athlete who also gives back to the community through volunteering.

"We are incredibly proud to award a record-breaking \$635,000 in scholarships to this exceptional group of graduates," said Chrissie Wetherbee, Morris Educational Foundation Scholarship chair and board chair of the Morris Educational Foundation Board of Trustees. "These students have distinguished themselves through their hard work, resilience, leadership, and commitment to their education. This milestone reflects not only their remarkable achievements, but also the extraordinary generosity of our donors, whose investments are helping make college more accessible and empowering these graduates to pursue their dreams with confidence."

As the leading provider of scholarships for Morristown High School students, the MEF is proud to offer the largest award of scholarship dollars to this graduating class.

The Morris Educational Foundation is proud to congratulate the following 2026 Scholarship Recipients:

- **Judy and Eliot Steinberg Scholarship – Up to \$25,000 annually for 4 years**
Presented to **Mateo Cardona, Frank Serrano Reyes, and Angie Simbana**, who will attend Rutgers University to study Economics, Engineering, and Pharmacology, respectively.
- **Carl George & Shirley L. Eklund Scholarship – Up to \$25,000 annually for 4 years**
Awarded to **Tessa Niznik**, who intends to pursue Elementary and Special Education at Seton Hall University.
- **Clifford Starrett Scholarship – \$80,000 (\$20,000 annually for 4 years)**
Awarded to **Orianna Jaimes Drayer**, who intends to pursue Biomedical Engineering at Rutgers University.
- **Wong Family Scholarship – \$30,000 (\$7,500 annually for 4 years)**
A merit-based scholarship awarded to **Melanie Funk**, who will major in Physics at Cornell University.
- **Ann Marie (DeFazio) and Marc Manahan Scholarship – \$15,000 (\$7,500 annually for 2 years)**
Given to **Ethan Santos**, who will attend Boston College as a Political Science major.
- **Charles D. Seligson Scholarship – \$12,000 (\$6,000 annually for 2 years)**
Presented to **Aryaa Vyas**, who will attend Rutgers University to study Molecular Biology and Biochemistry.
- **Stephen B. Wiley Scholarship – \$12,000 (\$6,000 annually for 2 years)**
Presented to **Lilia Ushiki**, who will attend the University of Wisconsin Madison to study Biomedical Engineering.
- **Colonial Cancer Foundation Scholarship – \$10,000**
Awarded to **Emerson Petr**, who will attend the University of New Haven as a Criminal Justice major.
- **Kerry and Kyle Wimley Scholarship – \$10,000**
Awarded to **Patrick Ruiz**, who will attend Villanova University to study Economics.
- **Capt. Brian J. McNally USMC Scholarship – \$6,000 (\$1,000 per year for 2 years and \$2,000 for the 3rd and 4th year)**
Given to **Abigail Higgins**, who will pursue Occupational Therapy at Elizabethtown College, and **Madison Zinckgraf**, who will pursue Nursing at Ramapo College.
- **Usha and Shri Tatachar Scholarship – \$6,000 (\$3,000/year for 2 years)**
Presented to **Sofia Rodriguez Caussade**, who plans to pursue Biology at Bucknell University.
- **Leonard P. Pergentile Scholarship – \$5,000**
Presented to **Samantha Lopez**, who will major in Nursing at Fairleigh Dickinson University.
- **George and Michele Becker Scholarship – \$4,000**
Awarded to **Samantha Lima**, who will attend Northeastern University to pursue Computer Science and Biology.
- **Dorothy F. Johnson Scholarship – \$3,500 (\$1,750 annually for 2 years)**
Awarded to **Christian Smith**, who intends to study Finance at Arizona State University.
- **John T. Cunningham Scholarship – \$3,000**
Given to **John Ulrick**, who will pursue Film and Media Studies at Temple University.
- **Feldman Family Scholarship – \$3,000**
Presented to **Jacqueline Gutierrez Santos**, who will attend Boston University to pursue Biomedical Engineering.
- **Javier Avelar Scholarship – \$2,500**
Presented to **Sarah Vinazco Pulido**, who plans to pursue Business Administration at Monmouth University.
- **Christopher L. Martin Scholarship – \$2,500**
Presented to **Lilah Araujo**, who will attend Florida State University to study Statistics.
- **The Ferrara-Myers Grandparents Scholarship – \$2,000**
Presented to **Ava Barry**, who plans on attending Montclair State University to study Environmental Science.
- **Fraternal Order of Eagles Morristown Airee 1311 Scholarship – \$2,000**

Given to **Anhad Singh**, who will attend Cornell University to pursue a degree in Healthcare Policy.

- **Jeff Leloia Scholarship – \$2,000**

Presented to **Leah Wolff**, who will study Education at the University of Utah.

- **Morris Educational Foundation Eric Manahan Scholarship – \$2,000**

Presented to **Brendan Critchley**, who will pursue Aviation at The Ohio State University.

- **Fred Sporer Scholarship – \$2,000**

Presented to **Allyson Herrera**, who plans to study Chemistry at Princeton University.

- **Class of '79 Morris 8 Scholarship – \$1,979**

Given to **Alison Salinas Ramirez**, who will attend Rutgers University.

- **Class of '79 Morris 8 Scholarship – \$1,000**

Given to **Garrett Gregor**, who will attend Carnegie Mellon University to study Mechanical Engineering.

- **Morristown Distinguished Wrestler Scholarship – \$1,500**

Presented to **Jahaziel Torres**, who will attend Sussex County Community College.

- **Morristown High School Class of 2020 Resilience Scholarship – \$1,500**

Awarded to **Shylah Janvier**, who will attend Fairleigh Dickinson University.

- **Mary Bentzlin Scholarship – \$1,000**

Awarded to **Lila Engel**, who will attend Fordham University to study Psychology.

- **Bruce Chamberlain Scholarship – \$1,000**

Presented to **Leah Gardberg**, who plans to study Food Science at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

- **Douenias Family Scholarship for Scholar Athletes – \$1,000**

Given to **Andrew Rocco**, who will attend Rutgers University to study Psychology.

- **Hess-Mulcahy Scholarship – \$1,000**

Given to **Arianna Castillo**, who will attend the University of Pennsylvania to study Biology (Pre-Med).

- **Estelle Walker Hinkins Memorial Scholarship – \$1,000**

Awarded to **Naja Spence**, who will attend Xavier University to study English and Education.

- **William Darell Johnson "Let's Get It Going!" Memorial Scholarship – \$1,000**

Presented to **Patrick Hassan**, who will attend Louisiana State University to study Construction Management.

- **Morristown Animal Hospital Animal Welfare Scholarship – \$1,000**

Awarded to **Anna Isleib**, who will attend Smith College to pursue Environmental Science and Statistics.

- **Coach Gil Shaffer Scholarship – \$1,000**

Given to **Adin Benitez-Granados**, who plans to study Business Administration at County College of Morris.

Scholarship donors, students and their families celebrated their scholarship awards at a breakfast reception hosted by the MEF on Thursday, June 11.

In the Morris Educational Foundation's scholarship history spanning 25 years, the organization has awarded over \$3.5 million in student scholarships. To view the full list of present and past award recipients, [click here](#).

Visit the Morris Educational Foundation on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date on events and programs, and the alumni and community network, Morristown Colonial Nation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or visit <https://morristowncolonial.nationbuilder.com>.

About Morris Educational Foundation

The Morris Educational Foundation, a 501(c)(3) corporation, enhances educational opportunities for more than 5,700 students in all 10 schools of the Morris School District. Established to raise private funds for public education, the Foundation works to enrich and inspire the academic pursuits of all our students, from preschool through high school. For more information, visit www.morriedfoundation.org.