



Working to benefit the community of Westbrook and its residents

2020 BY THE NUMBERS: THE WESTBROOK FOUNDATION

AWARDED \$146,900 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO THE CLASS OF 2020,

\$240,406.62 IN GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS

SCHOLARSHIPS

Last June, the Westbrook Foundation awarded scholarships totaling \$146,900 to members of the Westbrook High School Class (WHS) of 2020 to support their post-secondary educational pursuits. The Foundation also awarded \$4,000 in scholarships to Westbrook residents currently enrolled in college and graduate school.

The following members of the WHS Class of 2020 received the Foundation's most competitive scholarships, totaling \$100,000:

- **Isabel Araya:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Academic Achievement Award (\$6,000) and Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$8,000)
 - **Sarah Davey:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Academic Achievement Award (\$6,000) and Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$15,000)
 - **Juliana Fabrizi:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Leadership Award (\$3,000) and Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$8,000)
 - **Jaclyn Grace:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Good Citizen Award (\$3,000)
 - **Olivia Hartzell:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$4,000)
 - **Alexandra Koplas:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Academic Achievement Award (\$6,000) and Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$8,000)

- **Madison Liberatore:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$8,000)
 - **Gavin LaBrec:** Henry Ortner, Jr. Memorial Scholarship (\$7,000)
 - **Kendall Orlowski:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$3,000)
 - **Madeline Shaw:** Henry Ortner, Jr. Memorial Scholarship (\$7,000)
 - **Ian Whitehouse:** Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Spirit of Westbrook Award (\$3,000)
 - **Alexandria Young:** Elliot A. Spencer Memorial Scholarship (\$5,000)

Members of the WHS Class of 2020 also received the following scholarships totaling \$46,900:

Calderari-Hoxsie-Schubert-Steinson Veteran's Scholarship: **Stephanie Villeda**
Eileen M. Daily Scholarship: **Alivia Ciarcia**

Dorothy Christopher Hoyt Scholarship: **Linda Nelson and Callie Newberg**
Manstan-Nolf Memorial Technology Education Scholarship: **Jonathan Hotkowski**

Marie Mazeau Scholarship: **Madison Liberatore**

Herbert A. Muller, Jr. Memorial Scholarship: **Aidan Ranelli**

Ellen S. Murphy Scholarship: **Isabelle Rosado**

Joanne Marino-Murray Scholarship: **Gabe Gingras**

Brandon E. Norman Scholarship: **Jonathan Hotkowski**

Dan Nuhn Memorial Scholarship: **Madeline Shaw**

Shoreline Amateur Radio Club Scholarship: **Gabe Gingras**

Westbrook Education Association Peter M. D'Errico Award: **Isabel Araya**

Westbrook Education Association Daisy Ingraham Memorial Scholarship: **Sarah Davey**

Westbrook Education Association Scholarship: **Gavin LaBrec**

Raymond L. Wilson Scholarship: **Juliana Fabrizi**

Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarship Special Awards: Olivia Archer, Alivia Ciarcia, Gabe Gingras, Jaclyn Grace, Olivia Hartzell, Jonathan Hotkowski, Brandon Jacques, Alyssa Kjos, Micayla Malchiodi, Hannah Martin, Linda Nelson, Callie Newberg, Kendall Orlowski, Aidan Ranelli, Isabelle Rosado, Madeline Shaw, Stephanie Villeda, Ian Whitehouse, and Alexandria Young

The Westbrook Foundation also awarded \$4,000 in Messerschmidt scholarships to Westbrook residents currently enrolled in college or graduate school. The following individuals each received \$1,000 scholarships: **Danyelle Engels, Olivia Fabrizi, Jake Marciniec, and Daniel Perreault.**

(Continued inside)

Local Postal Customer



FROM THE CHAIR



Over the past 12 months, the COVID-19 global pandemic has driven all of us to make changes in our personal and professional lives. Social distancing, remote learning, quarantine,

lockdown, N-95, Zoom, and “the new normal” have all become part of our vernacular. There have been unprecedented challenges, indeed—but also areas for growth and connection. Through it all, the Westbrook Foundation has maintained its commitment to the community.

In 2020, the Foundation awarded \$146,900 in scholarships to graduating Westbrook students and \$240,406.62 in grants to local community organizations serving the town’s residents. Through these grants the Foundation has supported a diverse group of projects, from the construction of a new home in town to the installation of new signage at the high school athletic fields and upgraded technology for the Westbrook Public Library. In 2021, the Foundation expects to contribute more than \$465,000 to the Westbrook community through scholarships, grants, and charitable contributions.

I want to thank all of my fellow board members who generously volunteer their time and who share a singular commitment to serve the local community; our legacy donor, Barbara Spencer, whose spirit the Westbrook Foundation embodies; and, finally, all of those who make contributions to The Westbrook Foundation.

Best wishes for 2021.

Sincerely,
Paul Winch



A Contribution to the Future

An individual or an organization who makes a gift or bequest to The Westbrook Foundation can be assured that they have made a contribution that will benefit future generations.

For more information about The Westbrook Foundation, visit **www.westbrookfoundation.org**.

Flexibility in Giving

CASH: An outright cash gift to The Westbrook Foundation qualifies for federal income tax deductions in the year of the gift.

SECURITIES: Stocks and bonds that have increased in value may be given to The Westbrook Foundation. The donor receives a tax deduction for the value of the gift at market value, and avoids capital gains taxes.

BEQUEST: Bequests of cash, securities, or property may be made to The Westbrook Foundation either as a specific sum or as a percentage of the donor's estate.

MEMORIAL GIFTS: A gift to the Westbrook Foundation is a meaningful way to honor a special person or create a memorial to a loved one. Please note that the Westbrook Foundation can only accept checks made out to "Westbrook Foundation, Inc." If you wish to support a specific scholarship fund, please reference that fund in the check's memo line. The Westbrook Foundation is not able to accept cash donations or postal money orders.

LIFE INSURANCE/CHARITABLE GIFT

ANNUITIES: Donors may name The Westbrook Foundation as a beneficiary of life insurance policies. In the case of annuities, the donor may choose to retain income during their lifetime.

CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUST: A donor may designate The Westbrook Foundation as the beneficiary of this type of trust and still receive income during their lifetime. Donor receives tax deduction in the year the trust is established, and reduces estate taxes.



SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS (Continued)

GRANTS

In 2020, the Westbrook Foundation awarded \$240,406.62 in grants to 20 organizations during its fall and spring grant cycles.

- **Bridle Path Conservancy:** \$3,500 to rebuild water-crossing bridges that are vital for connecting multi-purpose trails in Cockaponset State Forest’s Weber Woods.
- **Camp Hazen YMCA:** \$6,000 to support the renovation of the existing high ropes challenge course and zip line.
- **Estuary Council of Seniors, Inc.:** \$10,000 to support the purchase of a new transport vehicle for the Meals on Wheels program.
- **First Congregational Church of Westbrook:** \$5,000 to meet church needs.
- **Friends of the Westbrook Public Library:** \$16,000 to support technology upgrades.
- **High Hopes Therapeutic Riding:** \$2,500 to provide scholarship assistance to economically disadvantaged Westbrook children and adults with special needs for equine-assisted activities and therapies.
- **Literacy Volunteers Valley Shore:** \$1,500 to purchase tutor supplies and workbooks to train 35 volunteer tutors.
- **Middlesex Habitat for Humanity:** \$70,000 across two grants to support the Westbrook build at 382 North Hammock Road.
- **Rotary Club of Old Saybrook, Old Lyme, and Westbrook:** \$1,680 to provide full Thanksgiving meals to elderly and disabled Westbrook residents.
- **St. Paul’s Episcopal Church:** \$3,000 to meet church needs.

- **SARAH, Inc.:** \$2,500 to support nutritional education for adults with intellectual and/or development disabilities.
- **Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries:** \$35,000 across two separate grants to provide food to Westbrook residents in need through SSKP’s five food pantries.
- **Town of Westbrook Recreation Department:** \$39,000 for a new playscape at West Beach.
- **Traveling Toys:** \$3,600 to establish a toy lending library at Westbrook Public Library.
- **Valley Shore YMCA:** \$10,000 to subsidize the Y’s after-school program at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School.
- **Westbrook Athletic Boosters:** \$5,000 to purchase two new roster boards for the Westbrook High School gym and windscreen signage for the athletic fields.
- **Westbrook Garden Club:** \$7,570 to support the final development phase of the Westbrook Garden Club’s 60th anniversary project to create a pollinator refuge at the entrance to Salt Island Overlook.
- **Westbrook Historical Society:** One grant of \$2,170 to install 14 historic plaques on town-owned buildings, schools, and churches and one grant of \$9,950 to contract with two firms to map and survey what lies beneath the Old Burying Ground for future historians and the general public.
- **Westbrook Visiting Nurses & Public Health:** \$1,436.62 to support the purchase of 252 booklets for home resources and materials.
- **Westbrook Youth & Family Services:** \$5,000 to increase Westbrook Youth & Family Services’ capacity to provide mental health services to Westbrook residents during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following scholarships are awarded to Westbrook residents each year. Full descriptions of each scholarship can be found online at www.westbrookfoundation.org/scholarships. Help to increase these scholarships by contributing to the fund principal of your choice:

- Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarships
- Brandon E. Norman Memorial Scholarship
- Calderari-Hoxsie-Schubert-Steinson Veteran’s Memorial Scholarship
- Dan Nuhn Memorial Scholarship
- Dorothy Christopher Hoyt Scholarship
- Eileen M. Daily Scholarship
- Ellen S. Murphy Scholarship
- Elliot A. Spencer Memorial Scholarship
- Henry Ortner, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
- Herbert A. Muller, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
- Josephine S. Crump Scholarship
- Krista Brielle Morant Memorial Scholarship
- Lew Daniels Scholarship
- Marie Mazeau Scholarship
- Manstan-Nolf Memorial Technology Education Scholarship
- Messerschmidt Scholarship
- Nicholas P. Tragakes Scholarship

- Patricia Mazeau and Myrtie Gareau Scholarship
- Raymond L. Wilson Scholarship
- Shoreline Amateur Radio Club Scholarship
- Tom ODeIl Scholarship
- Westbrook Grange #123 Scholarship

☐ I am considering making a contribution to The Westbrook Foundation and wish to be contacted by a director of the Foundation to discuss it.

☐ My contribution is enclosed, and I would like it to be applied to the fund principal for the following existing scholarship.

☐ Enclosed please find my company’s matching gift form.

☐ I would prefer my gift to remain anonymous.

Name

Telephone No.

Address

Become a partner in philanthropy through annual giving. Please make checks payable to The Westbrook Foundation, Inc. All gifts are tax-deductible.

For Further Information

An individual contemplating a gift to the Foundation should seek the advice of his or her attorney.

This mailer was prepared as reference material, and further information, including copies of the Certificate of Incorporation, and the By Laws of the Foundation may be obtained from:

The Westbrook Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 528
Westbrook, Connecticut 06498

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* Deceased

A HOME FOR THE BUZAS

The Westbrook Foundation awarded \$70,000 across two grants in 2020 to Middlesex Habitat for Humanity. The funds covered the majority of the cost of materials for the build on North Hammock Road.

The moment three-year-old Esther Buzas laid eyes on her new home on North Hammock Road, she began to call it “Esther’s house.”

“I’ve never seen my children so excited,” said Jeffrey Buzas, dad to Esther; her twin brother, Ezekiel; nine-year-old Gabriel; and six-month-old Grace. “They can open the door, go outside, and actually play in their own backyard—something they’ve never had the opportunity to do.”

This sense of ownership is particularly poignant for mom Rebeca Buzas: “This house is incredibly special because it will be my first time living in a house. Getting the opportunity to be able to give our children a better future through affordable living is such a blessing.”

The Buzas are grateful to Middlesex Habitat for Humanity (MHFH) for selecting their family to be the owners of the organization’s first build in



The Buzas, clockwise from top: Jeffrey; Rebeca, holding Grace; Ezekiel; Gabriel; and Esther
Photos courtesy of Sarah J. Bird

Westbrook—a project MHFH Executive Director Sarah J. Bird said the Westbrook Foundation helped make possible through two grants totaling \$70,000 in 2020.

During a time when the COVID-19 pandemic drove the cost of materials to a rate MHFH would not have otherwise been able to meet, the funds from the Westbrook Foundation covered “the majority of the building materials needed for the house,” Bird said. “In ‘normal’ times, receiving the majority of the building materials funds from a donor makes a large impact on the entire project, but during this project the impact took on a whole different meaning.

It gave us some breathing room to focus on completing the project, instead of focusing on where we would get [additional] funding.”

The Buzas expect to move into their new home early this spring after nearly a year of working alongside volunteers to raise the roof (literally, on August 6, 2020) and complete all other aspects of construction—no small feat during a global pandemic.

In addition to the usual challenges of balancing work and parenting responsibilities were the unique challenges of mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19 during the hours the Buzas spent contributing their “sweat equity” to the project: “Because of COVID, we were conscious about always washing our hands, using hand sanitizer, keeping our distance, and always keeping our masks on since we have children we were coming back home to,” said Jeffrey and Rebeca.

The Buzas said that the challenges have been well worth it, and that this past year has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience for their family: “We have never experienced so much generosity from a community before. We are truly overwhelmed. This home means everything to us.”



The Buzas’ new home on North Hammock Road

DELIVERING THANKSGIVING MEALS, CHEER IN A DIFFICULT YEAR



An Edd's Place staff member prepares an item for the Thanksgiving meals distributed by the Rotary Club with support from the Westbrook Foundation. Photo courtesy of Liz Wood

The Westbrook Foundation provided \$1,680 in grant funding for the Old Saybrook Rotary Club's initiative to distribute 50 take-home meals to Westbrook seniors.

From cooking up the idea to cooking up the food itself, the Old Saybrook Rotary Club's Thanksgiving meal-distribution initiative was truly a community effort, with the Westbrook Foundation providing \$1,680 in grant funding, a young local couple developing and preparing a tasty menu, and Liberty Bank donating tote bags to package the meals.

Gary McCauley, president of the club that also serves Westbrook and Old Lyme, said that when members wanted to develop a holiday project that would have the most impact on Westbrook, they knew to turn to Social Services Coordinator Elizabeth Carpenter to identify the area of greatest need. Rotarian Pat Settembrino reached out to Carpenter, who noted that the community's seniors would most benefit from receiving a Thanksgiving meal they could enjoy in their own home as many would be unable to gather with family and friends due to the pandemic.

Settembrino also wanted to keep it local when it came to selecting a restaurant to partner with, so he called Liz Wood and Tate Mayeux, who had recently become owners of Edd's Place. “They were quick to say yes, and they created a wonderful menu,” full of all the holiday favorites, said McCauley.

In total, Carpenter and her staff distributed 50 Thanksgiving meals for takeaway at Westbrook Town Hall, each one accompanied by an individually addressed, hand-written card wishing the recipient a happy Thanksgiving from the Westbrook Foundation and the Rotary Club.

In a year that was difficult for everyone, the warm effort was well received.

“The dinner was so good, right to the last bite,” one note of appreciation said. “Thank you so much for thinking of me.”

WHERE THEY ARE NOW *Catching up with two past recipients of Westbrook Foundation scholarships*

ARI TOMASSETTI, *Westbrook High School Class of 2014*

Current City: Atlanta, Georgia

Undergraduate Degree: B.S. in Integrative Health Science from Stetson University, 2017

Current Position: Student in the Master of Health Science in Physician Assistant Studies program at South College, anticipating graduation in fall of 2021

Advice for students about to graduate from high school: Try a lot of new things, branch out, and find out what you truly want to do with your life—there's a lot out there to explore and so many job opportunities that you may not realize. I'd also say, whatever you choose to do, work hard. A good work ethic and drive will take you very far. Lastly, don't be afraid to reach out to ask for help or to build connections.

Q. What have you been up to since graduating from college?

I'm currently in my clinical year of physician assistant school. I'm doing clinical rotations in Tennessee and Georgia. My goal is to come back to Atlanta and work in either cardiology or emergency medicine.

Q. What's one major challenge you've faced in your professional life, and how have you handled it?

During my senior year of college, I had to balance working nights as an EMT, leading the student volunteer program at a nearby free clinic, being president of my sorority, and taking class all at the same time. It felt like there weren't enough hours in a day. However, while I was at my limit in terms of what I could accomplish at the same time, I never doubted that I could get it all done because Westbrook had taught me how to balance my responsibilities: In high school I played sports throughout the entire school year and I was also involved in a multitude of clubs and organizations, as well as community service. Through trial and error and support from my family and friends, I learned how to get everything done. Ultimately, I graduated a semester early from college and



got straight A's my final semester. This has all translated well into the drive needed to conquer PA school.

Q. How have your connections to Westbrook enriched your life?

I continue to keep up with a few classmates from Westbrook High School. They're a great support system, and I'm glad our time at Westbrook fostered friendships we continue to keep up with. I also keep in touch with a few staff members, teachers, and coaches. They are always very supportive and offer their advice/help when they can!

ALEXANDER LAWTON, *Westbrook High School Class of 2011*

Current City: Los Angeles, California

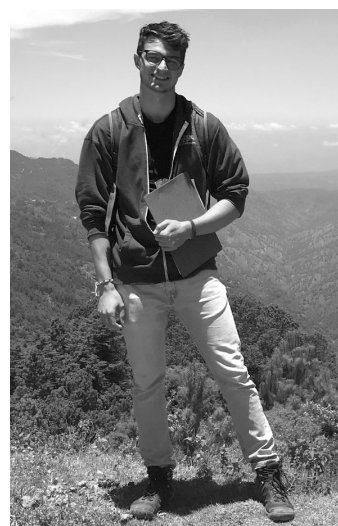
Undergraduate Degree: B.S. in Molecular and Cell Biology and B.A. in Spanish from the University of Connecticut, 2015

Graduate Degree: Master of Public Health from the Jonathan and Karin Fielding School of Public Health at the University of California—Los Angeles, 2020

Current Position: Full-time computer data analyst at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and part-time research associate at UCLA's Jonathan and Karin Fielding School of Public Health

Advice for students about to graduate from high school: Be open to new experiences and give yourself permission to change your path despite what others may say. I've had so many interesting and unconventional experiences that have helped me get to where I am today. Don't focus too much on the destination and enjoy the journey; new opportunities often present themselves in unexpected ways.

Q. What have you been up to since graduating from college?



I'm currently working at Cedars-Sinai, a hospital in Los Angeles, as a community data analyst. I help collect and process data from various community programs run by Cedars-Sinai that serve vulnerable populations around Los Angeles. The data is used to help allocate resources, push for more funding, and determine the impact the programs have had in the communities they serve. I also work part time at UCLA as a research analyst. Right now, I'm helping run two surveys that assess risk, vulnerability, and attitudes related to COVID-19, one among people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles, and another among international migrant workers from Bangladesh. With the data collected in the homelessness survey we have already been in touch with local leaders to inform the COVID-19 vaccination response among this population.

Q. What's one major challenge you've faced in your professional life, and how have you handled it?

I think the biggest challenge I've faced so far is in general not letting myself feel bound by the expectations of others. I've had a lot of mentors, friends, and family members along the way who have given me great advice, but I've also taken paths that were different from what they may have expected or wanted for me. This approach has allowed me to have diverse, enriching experiences, including spending a year after undergrad teaching English in Spain, despite external pressures to immediately pursue a graduate degree.

Q. How have your connections to Westbrook enriched your life?

Learning Spanish with Ms. Basler and Mr. Synott and hearing about their personal study abroad experiences inspired me to take Spanish classes at UConn and ultimately double major and study abroad in Spain. I think the volunteer work I participated in with school groups at Westbrook High School like SADD also inspired me to want to keep working in the community. Despite having moved out of Connecticut, it's always comforting to come back to Westbrook and catch up with friends from high school, many of whom I'm still very close to.