

2024 NVSL Scholarship Recipients

Presidents' Award - Tessa Jones



Tessa joined NVSL with the Langley Wildthings as a five year-old. Over the next 12 years, she placed at Individual All-Stars six times, received the High Point Award three times, and currently holds multiple relay and individual team records. She has also been a Wildthings junior coach for four seasons. She swam year-round for NCAP for eight years and was on their national team, qualifying for NCSAs. At Langley High School, Tessa was captain of the swim team, a state championship qualifier in relays and individual events, and part of the medley relay team that broke a 24 year-old school record. She was also very active in multiple school choirs and was president of the Spanish Honor Society. Tessa received a gold medal on the National Spanish Exam all four years and medaled in multiple Russian Language Exams. Outside of school, she volunteered with Fairfax County Adapted Aquatics and the McLean Safe Community Coalition. Tessa will be attending Yale University in the fall, majoring in global affairs.

"There is nothing like the bond a summer team has. It is the perfect mix of competitiveness and pure fun. It is the place where I can see people I have not spoken to in almost a year, but feel as if no time has passed."

Community Service Award - Ryan Mitchell



Ryan has swum for eight years and dived for 11 years, first for Commonwealth and then for Lakeview, where he is now the head dive coach. He has been an All-Star diver every year since he joined the dive team and has received several High Point Awards and Coach's' Awards. He enjoys cliff diving as well as springboard diving. At Robinson High School, Ryan was captain of the swim and dive team, qualified as a diver to the state championship, and swam in relays during dual meets. Outside of school, he competed as a Level 10 gymnast, tutored regularly with GIVE Youth, and earned his Eagle Scout Award. For his Eagle Scout project, he replaced the wood decking at Lakeview Pool with Trex, overseeing well over 20 volunteers for 18 days and saving his pool club thousands of dollars. Ryan will be attending the University of Virginia in the fall, majoring in financial mathematics and economics, and minoring in Spanish.

"Being a coach in the NVSL has taught me a lot about being a servant leader and helping others achieve their goals. There are few other organizations that allow you to work with children as young as six years old up to those that are in your peer group."

Spirit Award - Sienna Schmeck



As a 15-year member of the Hunt Valley Stingrays, Sienna has coached the Lil Rays program and served as a lane coach, helping to plan bonding activities for the team. She has also mentored younger swimmers in Hunt Valley's Swim Pal program. Sienna has qualified to All-Star Relays and Individual All-Stars multiple times and holds five team records. She swam for Machine Aquatics for five years and currently swims for Mason Makos. At West Springfield High School, Sienna was a four-year varsity swimmer, qualifying to the state championship every year. In the 2024 state meet, she finished second in the 100 freestyle and third in the 50 freestyle. Sienna excelled at rowing as well, winning the 2024 state championship with her four-person boat. She received her high school's "Elite 8 Award" given to the top athletes in her graduating class. Sienna also served as an assistant Sunday school teacher at her church. In the fall, Sienna will attend and swim for the University of Lynchburg.

"When I was in 5th grade we had to move to Colorado for my dad's assignment. The NVSL and our summer team meant so much to myself and my family that my mom and siblings came back for those two summers we were away so we could still swim in the NVSL. We couldn't imagine spending our summer any other way."

Sportsmanship Award - Daniel Chua



Daniel has swum with the Fair Oaks Sharks for 12 years. He is currently a lane coach and previously coached their junior program. He has qualified for Individual All-Stars and All-Star Relays several times. Daniel also swam with Machine Aquatics for nine years. At Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Daniel was a captain of the swim team and received the Coaches' Award his senior year. He was also very involved with his school's marching band and indoor drumline, serving as drumline captain. He joined several honor societies and was a National Merit Finalist. Daniel's volunteer work included tutoring students in writing, fundraising and loading equipment for the band, and doing yard work with his church to buy Thanksgiving dinners for families in need. In the fall, Daniel will study electrical engineering at Virginia Tech, joining the university's Corps of Cadets Air Force ROTC and regimental band.

"Nowhere else have I found a community that emphasizes sportsmanship and respect as much as NVSL does. It starts with the smallest of details, like how every meet is commenced with the national anthem, prompting me to wish my competitors good luck... we are all united, despite our competitive division. My coaches have also always encouraged me to shake hands after every race, teaching me to take all my losses with a smile, celebrating for those who win fairly."

Excellence in Technique Award - Colin McGee



Colin has swum for the Forest Hollow Gators for 14 years. He has served his team as an assistant coach, skit writer, and "Gator Ghost." He has also played the national anthem on his cello at many A and B meets, and at the All-Star Relay Carnival in front of a crowd of hundreds. Colin swam for York Swim Club on their national team. At Annandale High School, he was the swim team captain, a state championship qualifier, and a school record-holder. He was chosen Male Athlete of the Year in his senior year. Colin was also president of his high school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes and active in the philharmonic orchestra. Outside of school, he was the captain altar server at his church and regularly volunteered at Food for Neighbors. Colin will continue his education and his swimming career at College of the Holy Cross this fall.

"As I have developed into that older swimmer, I have learned to appreciate the quality of the NVSL. There is no other league I know that incorporates children thirteen years apart in age, where character, sportsmanship, and team spirit are valued more than elite performance."

About the NVSL Scholarships:

Presidents' Scholarship - Created in honor of the volunteers who served as league presidents of NVSL.

Community Service Scholarship - Created in honor of George MacDuff and daughter Melinda. George served as the league records chairperson for many years.

Spirit Scholarship - Created in honor of Olivia Aull to recognize spirited swimmers and divers from within the NVSL family.

Sportsmanship Scholarship - Created in honor of Joan Olson, long-time director of the NVSL and chairperson of the Seeding Committee, who was a passionate advocate for sportsmanship.

Excellence in Technique Scholarship - Created in honor of Lou Sharp, founder of the Competition Swim Clinic, who guided generations of NVSL swimmers in stroke technique and love for swimming.