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## Student and Staff Achievements

### September 2021

#### **The Ronald Reagan Great Communicator Debate Series**

**Stamford High School (SHS)** Junior **Ryan Shoztic** was one of only 16 students nationwide to qualify for the National Championships Reagan Foundation Annual Great Communicator Debate Series, which was held in July. According to the organization, the Ronald Reagan Great Communicator Debate Series was founded to develop engaged, informed and conscientious citizen leaders by hosting a national series of high school debates. The debate features students who effectively use logic, evidence and personality to communicate their ideas, just as Ronald Reagan did throughout his life. As a National Championship Qualifier, Ryan received an all-expense paid trip to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Southern California, including a private tour of the library, dinner under the wings of Air Force One, and a chance to compete with and meet an extraordinary group of young leaders.

#### **2021 Project Lead The Way Biomedical Teacher of the Year Award**

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) recently named **Academy of Information Technology & Engineering Teacher (AITE) Danielle Weber** as a 2021 PLTW Biomedical Teacher of the Year. The honor recognizes educators who demonstrate a strong record of delivering an inspiring and empowering student experience, expanding access to PLTW programs and transforming teaching. AITE Teacher Erin Ritz, a fellow teacher in the PLTW Biomedical Program, initiated the nomination process, and AITE Principal Tina Rivera provided a recommendation and supporting evidence for consideration by the organization. PLTW selected Ms. Weber from among nominations received across the country.

#### **National Merit Scholarships Semifinalists**

The National Merit® Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) named **Stamford High School (SHS)** Seniors **Archie Shanley** and **Madeline Shapiro** and **Westhill High School (WHS)** Seniors **Arjun Anand, Aryan Donikena, Gavin Stops** and **Rhea Wadhwa** among the 16,000 semifinalists in the 67th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. According to NMSC, these students are among the highest scorers in the state and the top 16,000 students nationwide who earned the honor of semifinalist. These academically talented students have earned the opportunity to compete for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$30 million to be offered next spring. A Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT® or ACT® scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.

## **The Coolidge Cup**

Eight **Stamford High School** students were among only 80 students nationwide to qualify and compete in the Coolidge Cup, a debate tournament that attracts top qualifying students in speech and debate from across the country. To compete in the Coolidge Cup, students must qualify in either declamation or debate through various Coolidge Cup qualifier competitions held across the country. Coolidge Cup participants competed in President Coolidge's historic hometown of Plymouth, Vermont, during the week of the July 4, 2021. The Coolidge Foundation assisted participants with travel expenses and covered all hotel and meal expenses for students. During the weekend, students participated in four rounds of debates, toured the Coolidge Library and heard a presentation by special guest Steve Forbes.

- **Alba Alizoti**
- **Krishma Gewali**
- **Lucia Kempton**
- **Panos Ketonis**
- **Selin Osman**
- **Kaitlyn Pepa**
- **Ryan Shoztic**
- **Dea Veshaj**