

# Cape Kiwanis hands out scholarships at annual banquet

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The smartest, brightest and, in some cases, neediest high school seniors in Cape Coral got a huge boost toward their college careers, thanks to the generosity of the Cape Coral Kiwanis.

The charitable organization handed out more than \$100,000 in scholarships on Wednesday as it hosted its annual Kiwanis Scholarship Awards Dinner at the Kiwanis Club on Santa Barbara Boulevard.

Ten hard-working students, many of whom may not have been able to attend college without taking out tens of thousands in student loans, received at least \$10,000 over their four-year college careers, which will certainly make a good dent in paying for their future education.

"Some of the money comes from endowments and some from sales at the Kiwanis thrift stores," said Ron Kemper, chairman of the scholarship committee. "We're fortunate we can help five of the recipients."

Kemper said the three criteria the Kiwanis look at are grade-point average, which is 3.5 or higher; their potential, which is how they perform on the SAT exams; and financial need.

"Some of the recipients of our scholarships have an estimated family contribution, based on a Department of Education calculation, of zero," Kemper said. "Some of these kids would not go to college without a scholarship or getting loans and working three jobs."

That fact wasn't lost on recipients like Daniela Medina, a Mariner graduate who will attend Florida Gulf Coast University for two years before attending Southeastern University to major in social work.

"I was really emotional about it because \$10,000 will contribute a lot to my education. It's investing in my future," Medina said. "I'm the first one to go to college in my family, and the money wasn't there."

The biggest winner was Alexandra Mackey, a Cape Coral High School graduate who will attend the University of Florida. Mackey received the \$12,000 Ralph Ackerman Scholarship, named after the original chairman of the Kiwanis



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**From left, scholarship winners Daniela Medina, Alina Sin, Janay Clytus, Juan Alonzo, John O'Donnell, Napoleon Garang, Alexandra Mackey, Michael Johnsrud, and Rebecca Abernathy during the Kiwanis scholarship banquet Wednesday.**

scholarship committee who was on hand to give the award.

"I was relieved when I found out I won. Financial issues have been a problem and this will have such a huge impact on going to college and achieving my future career goals," Mackey said. "I've volunteered at their thrift store and they truly make an impact on people's lives."

Janay Clytus of Mariner and, soon, the Florida Institute of Technology, earned the \$11,000 "Skip" Hawley Scholarship.

Alina Sin and Napoleon Galang, both of Cape Coral, who will both attend the University of Florida, received the \$10,000 Holmes Scholarship and \$10,000 Herman Scholarship, respectively.

The other \$10,000 scholarship winners include Medina,

Oasis graduate John O'Donnell who will attend the University of Alabama; Cape Coral grad Juan Alonso who will go to the University of Florida; Bishop Verot's Rebecca Abernathy and Michael Johnsrud who will attend Stevens Institute of Technology and Florida State University respectively; and Oasis Charter's Nadine Joseph who already is attending Johns Hopkins University and was not present to accept the award.

The Kiwanis scholarship program began around 1980 when Ackerman became chairman of the committee, a position he held until he retired in 1995 and the Ralph Ackerman scholarship was established.

At least 10 scholarships have been awarded annually since 1984, and more than 400 students have received them.