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GUERIN PREP OPENS NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH 38 NOLAN SCHOLARS

Among the 620 students who started the school year at Guerin College Preparatory High School this year are 20 sophomores and 18 freshmen who have been named Nolan Scholars.

The sophomores are now in the second year of the program, which was introduced last school year to provide academically talented students a more challenging program.

This special four-year program gives gifted, motivated students an opportunity to pursue advanced courses of study, participate in enrichment and service experiences and receive special mentoring all aimed at preparing them to succeed at top tier colleges and universities. The program was named in honor of Sister Nancy Nolan, who was the president of Guerin Prep until February 2007.

Karin Calandriello, Guerin Prep English teacher, is the director of the program. She works with Tom Jaworski, who serves as the academic advisor just for these students, and a committee of faculty and administrators who offer guidance in the program's development.

The 18 freshmen Nolan Scholars have already participated in their first activity. Following an orientation session Aug. 14 for students and their parents, the students participated in the Barrington Teams Challenge Course.

The challenge is a series of outdoor events and initiatives designed to promote group effectiveness and cooperation. With the guidance of a trained facilitator, participants are challenged and encouraged to reinforce the importance of working together as a team in a non-threatening atmosphere.

As Mrs. Calandriello explained, "The challenge course is also intended to establish trust between the participants and to instill self-confidence. We want to encourage these students to be leaders in the school."

The obvious center of attention for the freshmen Nolan Scholars will be study skills and adapting to high school, but they also will focus on two themes during the year: Chicago, its architecture and history, and the environment and land. In exploring those themes there will be field trips to the city of Chicago and to UIUC.

They also will participate in the Fairchild Challenge, a free, multidisciplinary contest that challenges Chicago-area high schools to take action on behalf of the environment. Students participate in the challenge by submitting entries in up to 11 categories that include land use planning, photo journalism, tee shirt design, music composition, environmental action and more. The challenge is sponsored by the Chicago Botanical Gardens.

Last year's Nolan Scholars did outstanding work in the Fairchild Challenge. Awards were presented to Melissa Cywrus, Melanie Niepsuj, Paula Kopec and Teri Brieske for their photos, which have been published in a coffee table book called, "The Plan of Chicago at 100." Izik Alequin received second place for his original composition, "Say Hi to the End of the World." Also acknowledged were Kim Bianco, Molly Campbell, Joanna Nguyen, Vanessa Negron and Pat O'Brien for their eco-action plan.

Through the efforts of these young scholars, Guerin College Prep was one of seven schools out of more than 50, and the only non-public school, to receive the Fairchild Challenge School Award.

The themes for the sophomore Nolan Scholars are the law and medicine. Participation in a mock trial, in the National Online Youth Summit and Law Day are currently being investigated as well as a courtroom visit.

As part of the focus on medicine, the students will hear speakers on smoking, diet and other health-related issues as well as participate in the Relay for Life, sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

Additionally, the sophomore Nolan Scholars will undergo an ACT review one day a week during the first semester and two days a week during the second semester.

Ms. Calandriello is also exploring the possibility of a college study tour, which all 38 Nolan Scholars could participate.

"All of these activities are intended to provide the student with real world experiences and to cultivate leadership and academic potential," Calandriello explained.

She is most proud of the growth and success enjoyed by the students in the augural class of Nolan Scholars. "They had set a standard of excellence to which future Nolan Scholars will be challenged."

New Nolan Scholars

The freshmen who have been named Nolan Scholars include Chicago residents: Anisa Bravo, Suzanna Deneen, Erika Gomez, Ashley Hall, Kevin Kross, Ryan Kurtz, Geena Lardino, Shannon Manzella, James Nasiri, Giovanni Palomino, Andrew Rangel, Jaime Santana, Oliver Sitkowski, Jaclyn Story and Cara Yacobucci.

Other freshmen in the program are Karolina Cieslak of Norridge, Agnes Galej of Harwood Heights and Allison Stieber of Elmwood Park.

Each of the Nolan Scholars receives a \$2,000 tuition scholarship.

Fourteen of these students also earned either a president or principal's scholarship. The president scholarship of \$2,000 is automatically awarded to the top 10 scorers on Guerin Prep's January Placement Test. It is renewable for the sophomore year if the student maintains a 3.6 GPA. These recipients are Karolina Cieslak, Agnes Galej, Erika Gomez, Ryan Kurtz, Geena Lardino, Shannon Manzella, James Nasiri, Nicholas Penaherrera and Jaclyn Story.

Nolan scholars who also won a principal scholarship are Anisa Bravo, Joshua Ortega, Giovanni Palomino, Andrew Rangel and Jamie Santana. Principal scholarships go to those students who are among the next 15 top scorers on the placement test. The \$1,500 scholarship is renewable for the sophomore year if the student maintains a 3.6 GPA.

Returning Nolan Scholars

The returning Nolan Scholars include the following students from Chicago: Dylan Choate, Melissa Cyrwus, Paula Kopec, Iwona Lazarz, Steven Legacki, Vanessa Negron, Melanie Niepsuj, Margaret Obacz, Patrick O'Brien, Danielle Santore, Natalia Skrzyniarz, Will Torres and Danielle Wade.

Other sophomore Nolan scholars include Joanna Nguyen of Bloomingdale, Jessica McClain and Jenna Zacharias of Elmwood Park; Kim Bianco of Melrose Park; and Izik Alequin, Molly Campbell and Cassidy Tarpey of River Grove.

Of these Izik, Alequin, Melissa Cyrwus, Paula Kopec, Iwona Lazarz, Steven Legacki, Natalia Skrzyniarz, Cassidy Tarpey and Will Torres have been renewed as recipients of presidential scholarships.

Gioia Marzulla, Jessica McClain, Melanie Niepsuj, Danielle Santore and Jenna Zacharias have had their principal scholarships renewed.