



News Release

SAINT THERESE ANNOUNCES YOUTH VOLUNTEER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

*Woodbury's Elly Rowan and Champlin's Grace Olaleye awarded
\$2,000 educational scholarships*

Saint Louis Park, Minn. (May 21, 2024) – Saint Therese today announced the two recipients of its Youth Volunteer Scholarships, which are awarded annually to recognize youth volunteers who enrich the lives of seniors. Winners this year are Woodbury resident Elly Rowan and Champlin native Grace Olaleye. They were recognized at a reception on May 17 at Saint Therese at Oxbow Lake in Brooklyn Park.

Rowan and Olaleye will both receive \$2,000 educational scholarships. They earned the award by submitting essays that describe how volunteering and working with seniors has impacted them and the seniors they served. Saint Therese received 26 submissions for the scholarship from 18 high schools in the metro and Monroe, Mich., areas.

Elly Rowan, a junior at Hill Murray High School in Maplewood, wrote in her essay, “Music with Elly,” about how for the past two years she played music for a group of residents at The Waters of Oakdale. Every Sunday morning, she plays guitar and sings the music that the seniors enjoy and particularly likes when they sing along. She said, “What I enjoy most about these mornings are the conversations that take place before and after the hour of music.” She said the music often stirs up memories and she’s heard “an archive of stories,” from babies being born, wars being fought, romantic European trips, found love and lost love, and about making social change.

Elly added, “With a life full of experiences, there is a lot to learn from older adults. I have learned about the value of hard work, the importance of chasing dreams and being persistent. Most importantly, I have learned seniors have a lot to offer.”

Elly said she will continue performing at The Waters until she leaves for college in 2025. The college isn’t known yet, but she hopes to major in international business and marketing and minor in French. She also wants to participate in a collegiate choir and possibly perform in collegiate musical productions.

Grace Olaleye, a senior at Champlin Park High School, provided technology support for residents at Saint Therese at Oxbow Lake for two years and found the experience to be life-changing. “My meetings with residents became a trade-off. They asked me a question about technology, I listened and taught them how to understand technology and how to work through problems they were having. In turn, I asked them questions about their life and they taught me things I will carry with me forever.”

She went on to say that volunteering has taught her how to teach. “Being at Saint Therese was something I had never expected to impact me in the way that it has. Though I spend my days teaching, I am learning far more. . . It is more than volunteering to me, it is a passion.”

Grace plans to go to the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and pursue a degree in Human Physiology.

At the reception, Susan Connolly, director of Volunteer Services for Saint Therese, said, “Youth volunteers bring an energy and a fresh perspective wherever they serve. And the intergenerational friendships they create are so valuable, and benefit both the seniors and the youth.”

To be eligible for the Youth Volunteer Scholarship, volunteers had to be in grades 11-12 during the 2023-24 school year and have completed a minimum of 20 volunteer hours with one or more seniors by the date of the submission. Eligible applicants must reside in the seven county Twin cities metro

area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington), the Western Wisconsin counties of Pierce and St. Croix, or the Michigan counties of Monroe and Wayne.

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About Saint Therese: Minnesota-based Saint Therese was founded in 1964 and prides itself on its rich tradition of providing exceptional care for seniors. It has locations and services in New Hope, Brooklyn Park, Woodbury, a new location in Corcoran (opening in Fall 2024), IHM Senior Living Community in Monroe, Mich and Ascend Rehabilitation (rehabilitation therapy, health and wellness division). Most communities provide the full continuum of care from independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing and transitional care. It also has a location specializing in hospice and palliative care in Shoreview. It is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) senior care organization.

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