

Natick resident's essay wins \$5,000 scholarship



Natick resident Melanie Josselyn, right, and her mother, Denise

By Thomas Burke/Daily News correspondent

[The MetroWest Daily News](#)

Posted Aug 04, 2011 @ 12:00 AM

A Natick woman and recent graduate of Keefe Tech will be heading to UMass-Amherst next month with the help of a scholarship she earned for her poignant essay about her mother's recovery from a brain aneurysm.

Melanie Josselyn, who plans a career in neuroscience research, recently won the \$5,000 A. James Lavoie Scholarship from Middlesex Savings Bank.

The scholarship, the top prize in the bank's competition, came after judges read of Josselyn's efforts to help her mother, Denise, regain her memory after coming close to death in 2007.

Twenty-eight other college-bound students from MetroWest received \$1,000 grants.

Josselyn was in her freshman year at Keefe Tech in Framingham when she learned that her mother had suffered a cerebral aneurysm.

Denise Josselyn was taken to MetroWest Medical Center in Natick, then transferred to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center where she underwent hours of surgery.

Within a few days, she was able to sit up, then walk, but her memory was slow to return. Melanie Josselyn's essay recounted the family's work with her mother at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, then after they returned to their home near Lake Cochituate in Natick.

To help find lost memories, family members brought in photo albums, took pictures of the house and neighbors, and patiently recounted stories from years gone by, she said. After about three months, her mother began recognizing people and recalling events - although gaps in her memory still remain.

Josselyn said her mother struggled for weeks to identify her, the youngest of her three children.

"I felt that even though she could not remember me, with some hard work and a lot of patience, I could bring back the part of her that knew who I was," Josselyn wrote in her essay. "Though at times it was frustrating when the fifth, sixth, even seventh attempts failed. I knew my dedication to help her was stronger than my discouragement."

Late in her sophomore year, Josselyn selected the topic for her required research paper in the Health Careers program: cerebral aneurysms. Research took up most of her junior year and twice brought her for full-day sessions to the medical library at UMass Medical School in Worcester. She consulted more than 50 texts and ended up citing 13 of them.

While at Keefe, Josselyn became a certified nursing assistant, which requires solid academic performance and mastering patient-care skills. The job also requires 500 hours of clinical work, which she performed at St. Patrick's Manor and Bethany Health Care Center in Framingham.

On June 23, Melanie won the silver medal in nurse assisting at the 2011 National Leadership Conference of Skills USA, placing second in a field of 26 high school students.

Josselyn's objective is to get a degree in psychology. Medical school or a master's degree may follow, but her ultimate goal is to be a researcher.

She says that life in the research lab means long hours, many frustrations and dead-ends, and a limited social life.

"I'm OK with that. If one avenue ends in research, there's always another branch," Josselyn said. "The more people you have from different backgrounds working on the same topic the more ideas there will be and the greater the possibility of a positive outcome."

Middlesex Savings Bank \$1,000 scholarship winners:

Alexander Cook, Framingham High School, who will attend Earlham College

Abigail Smith, Framingham High School - Resiliency for Life; attending Nichols College

Briana Jackson, Keefe Tech, attending UMass-Boston

Michelle Higgins, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, attending Williams College

Sedona Murphy, Algonquin Regional High School, attending Haverford College

Leslie Snapper, Ashland High School

Amelia Kulik, Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School, attending Northeastern University

Kyle Whitmore, Bedford High School, attending Louisiana State University;

Allison Healy, Bellingham High School, attending Penn State

Olivia Patsos, Concord-Carlisle High School

Sueanny Lopez, Milford High School, attending Regis College

Brian McNally, Medway High School, attending Emerson College

Scott Cope, Medfield High School, attending Boston University or George Washington University

Katherine Jones, Maynard High School, attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Elizabeth Houle, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

Sarah Miller, Hopkinton High School, attending Loyola University

Timothy Garry, Holliston High School, attending UMass-Dartmouth

Ryan Soucy, Franklin High School, attending UMass-Amherst

Erica Chrisis, Groton-Dunstable Regional High School, attending University of Delaware

Sean Nelson, Millis High School, attending Massachusetts Maritime Academy

Christopher Peck, Minuteman Regional High School, attending Nichols College or Framingham State University

Andy Wong, Natick High School, attending UMass-Amherst

Carsten Shaw, Tri-County Regional Vocational High School, attending Fitchburg State University

Angelo Catanese, Wayland High School

Kevin Bu, Wellesley High School, attending Harvard University

Read more: <http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/archive/x633531666/Natick-residents-essay-wins-5-000-scholarship#ixzz1U2iiHnKL>