



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

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FRED AKSHAR December 18, 2017

| ISSUE: **AKSHAR'S ALL-STARS, STUDENT RECOGNITION**



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Senator Fred Akshar visited four more local schools on this week to continue a his “Akshar's All-Stars” district-wide student recognition program.

Each month, Senator Akshar recognizes three or four local students selected by their school districts in the 52nd Senate District who have shown great leadership, compassion, school spirit or improvement amongst their peers.

For each student recognized as an “Akshar All-Star” Senator Akshar will present them with a t-shirt, framed certificate and a challenge coin.

In the first two months since beginning the program, Akshar recognized students at Maine-Endwell Middle School, Windsor Central School District, Harpursville Central High School, Tioga Central High School, Vestal Middle School and Oxford High School. On Monday, Akshar recognized students at Norwich High School, Delaware Chenango Madison Otsego (DCMO) BOCES, Deposit High School and Newark Valley High School.



At Norwich High School, Akshar recognized senior Ellie O'Neil for her constant engagement in a wide range of school activities, her outgoing and cheerful personality and her steady and determined leadership as she goes out of her way to be helpful to her classmates. Ellie is currently the Valedictorian for her graduating class, takes challenging courses with excellent attendance and is involved in athletics and various clubs. Ellie ran for Senior class President last year and lost, but came back this year and ran for Student Body Secretary and won. Ellie is a dancer and teacher at Perkins School of the Arts, part of the Phoenix Project Dance, recently danced at the Guggenheim in NYC, is in Pep Club, a member of Dollars For Scholars, is on the soccer team and a member of Student Government. Ellie plans to attend medical school and eventually become a doctor.

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Ellie O'Neil said, "We all come from a pretty small community, and it's easy to feel sometimes like that's where you'll stay and you should only dream as big as the county or school district that you're in, but I think it's important to dream bigger than that and shoot higher."



At DCMO BOCES, Akshar recognized 18-year-old Cordel VanDermark for being a leader in the classroom, on the athletic field and out in the community, where he is able to balance the role of student, athlete and volunteer with ease and with a positive attitude. Cordel is involved in Chorus, Orchestra, Soccer, Track & Field and YES! Leads. He is also President of DCMO BOCES Future Farmers of America (FFA), where he received the Student of the Year

Award last year. Outside of school he is a Boy Scout and a volunteer firefighter for the Bainbridge Fire Dept. for 3 years where he received the Rookie of the Year Award. He plans on attending college at SUNY Cobleskill to become a diesel mechanic.



At Deposit High School, Akshar recognized 18-year-old Darren Shaver for his ability to lead, motivate and encourage his peers and teammates by acting as a positive role model. Always looking out for the “underdog,” Darren's hard work and “never quit” attitude has lead him to become a well-respected student and athlete among his peers.



At Newark Valley High School, Akshar recognized senior Collen Hills for his leadership on the athletic fields, in the classroom and in his community. In addition to serving on Student Council, Collen plays 3 varsity sports and still has time to help out younger students during Phys-Ed classes and work with special needs children at a summer recreational program. Collen does it all with a positive attitude and a smile on his face.

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Senator Fred Akshar said, "This is a great opportunity for us to work with school district throughout the 52nd Senate District to recognize outstanding young people who are doing wonderful things in our community. Whether they're in 2nd grade or a senior in high school, we want to bring attention to those students who are making a difference in their own lives and in the lives of those around them. They inspire us all by showing us the good that exists in our communities."