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**Delaney McDaniel chosen as 2015 McKeown Scholar**  
*Woburn Memorial High School senior wins \$10,000 scholarship*

WOBURN, May 15, 2015 – Graduating senior Delaney McDaniel bested 23 of the top scholars in this year’s graduating high school class to become Woburn’s class of 2015 McKeown Scholar.

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> and final year of the McKeown Scholars competition. It was developed by Woburn-based Cummings Foundation in memory of James “Jamie” L. McKeown, a Woburn native, 1973 Woburn High School graduate, and late president of Cummings Properties, who died suddenly in 1996 at the age of 41. Since its inception, the program has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships to more than 830 students.

The Foundation will continue to honor McKeown through a recent commitment of \$2 million to the newly renamed James L. McKeown Boys & Girls Club of Woburn.

McDaniel, who will attend the Nursing program at Endicott College in Beverly this fall, will receive a \$10,000 scholarship and a framed certificate during Senior Awards Night at Woburn Memorial High School’s Flaherty Auditorium on Wednesday, May 27 at 7:00 p.m. The award will be presented by Winchester resident Denise McKeown, widow of Jamie McKeown.

McDaniel has been a member of James L. McKeown Boys & Girls Club since she was 8 years old. Jamie McKeown had a lifelong association with the Club. He was selected “Boy of the Year” in 1974, worked as the Club’s aquatics director in college, and was the first alumnus of the Club to be elected a director and then its president.

Following in McKeown’s footsteps, McDaniel went from being a youth member to a staff member. She has been teaching ballet and tap at the Club for the last four years.

“Delaney’s clear desire to make the world a better place, especially for young people, makes her a fine choice for one of our final McKeown Scholars,” said Joel Swets, the Foundation’s executive director.

Woburn high school seniors in the top 20 percent of their class were invited to participate in the McKeown Scholars competition, which began with a written essay under exam conditions. Then high school teachers evaluated the anonymous essays and selected three finalists. The winner

was chosen from among those three by school staff, based on overall essay quality, an application packet, community service record, reputation, and a personal interview.

“Although I am in the top 10 percent of my class, I was nervous to be competing with classmates who had stronger academic records,” said McDaniel. “When I found out that I got the McKeown scholarship, I was blown away.”

McDaniel will travel to the Caribbean island of St. Kitts for two weeks in June. This is the fourth trip she will make there with her grandparents, who fell in love with the island more than 30 years ago while on vacation and purchased a home there.

McDaniel learned at a young age when delivering pencils to impoverished Kittian schoolchildren that there are many people less fortunate than she in the world. Each year since that first trip, she sends schools supplies and clothing to St. Kitts with her grandparents.

McDaniel gives back at home, too. She is the director of the associate members of Woburn Memorial High School’s Best Buddies program, which pairs typical students with those with intellectual and developmental disabilities for one-to-one friendships. Spending time with her buddy has taught her that “little actions can go a long way.”

This year’s essay question asked students, “If you were to create a graphic novel (comic book) with a new superhero who would combat society’s greatest problem today, what problem would he/she attack and how? What powers would this superhero possess?”

McDaniel envisioned a superhero called “Cyberman,” who would rid the world of cyber bullying, which she says is prevalent with some teens today who use social media to bully their peers.

McDaniel will complete the five-year Nursing program at Endicott, which will earn her a master’s degree. Her dream is to work at Boston Children’s Hospital as a pediatric oncology nurse.

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PHOTO: McKeown Scholar Delaney McDaniel

### **2015 McKeown Scholar essay topic**

*If you were to create a graphic novel (comic book) with a new superhero who would combat society’s greatest problem today, what problem would he/she attack and how? What powers would this superhero possess?*

### **Essay by 2015 McKeown Scholar Delaney McDaniel (unedited from original submission)**

Superheroes are among those whom we, as a society, have admired and aspired to be ever since we were children. Superheroes are invincible. They soar through the skies with their shields of courage and capes of diligence, fighting off the villains lurking the shadows of life. We have ultimately placed our fate in the

hands of superheroes, looking towards them for comfort and safety. Today, our fate seems to inevitably lie in the hands of social media and the impulsive choices we make to leak our thoughts and words into the ever-present Internet-sphere.

Now-a-days, there are two worlds: the real world and the social media world. In the real world, we are everyday heroes. Each and every day we reach out and use our diligence to help those who are in need. Our super powers only extend so far into the real world and once we are immersed in the fast-paced world of social media our super powers are stripped, leaving us, as society, helpless to the evil that lurks through the cyber-waves of the Internet. Social media has become a phenomenon, enhancing methods of communication and linking innumerable worlds together. Social media engines, such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, give society a new and innovative method of sharing ideas and thoughts to friends and family, although social media has become truly detrimental, endangering the lives of millions of teenagers at the hands of cyber bullies.

It is hard to accept that America's youth are the villains of today's society, but it is true. Cyber bullying is a prevalent matter as social media allows cyber bullies to have constant contact with their victims, harassing and torturing them with vulgar thoughts and sayings over the computer screen. Cyber bullies affects their victims in traumatizing ways, leaving many with severe mental issues as well as leading many to suicide. If only there were a superhero to combat the wicked ways of cyber bullies...

Look! Over there! See that man soaring through the computer! It is Cyberman! Cyberman has come to spare the many lives of those who face the realities of cyber bullying each and every day. He has impeccable speed as he soars through the cyber waves of Twitter and Instagram, using his laser beam eyes to permanently erase the horrid words left behind by cyber bullies for their victims. Cyberman is quite small, microscopic to be exact, but he has a large heart. Cyberman's ultimate goal is to rid social media of all cyber bullies, stripping each cyber bully of their ability to target their victims. Each and every morning as a victim of cyber bullying awakes to expose themselves to the taunting words of their cyber bullies, they can only hope that Cyberman has visited their computer in time, relieving them of the words that will haunt them for eternity. The fate of America's youth lies in the hands of Cyberman and his ability to erase vengeful words aimed for the innocent thus combating society's greatest issue to date.