

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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Thunder grads selected as Golden Apple Scholars

Two recent Woodstock North High School grads have been chosen as 2023 Golden Apple Scholars securing up to \$23,000 in scholarship funds along with training toward their future career as teachers.

Mary Martin and Reagan Ungaro were among more than 2,000 Illinois students who applied for the scholarships recently announced by the Golden Apple Foundation.

According to its website, Golden Apple Scholars is a teacher preparation and tuition assistance program for high school seniors and freshman and sophomore Illinois college students who have the determination and drive to be highly effective teachers in Illinois schools-of-need.

Both Martin and Ungaro are the daughters of Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 teachers.

Jennifer Rooney, a family and consumer science teacher at Woodstock North and adviser to the WNHS Educators Rising program for students pursuing careers in education, said she is extremely proud of both young women.

"They both are going to be amazing teachers. Both Mary and Reagan have shown those qualities we want to see in future teachers like enthusiasm, passion for helping others, and a love of learning. Their work in the Golden Apple program will help them be strong, resilient, resourceful educators and hopefully they will come back and join our amazing community of educators here in the future," Rooney said.

Martin will attend Eastern Illinois University in the fall to study elementary education.

"I have always wanted to be a teacher," Martin said. "I come from a long line of educators in my family, including my mom and dad. My great-grandmother was even a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in McHenry County.

"Some of my greatest role models have been my teachers in D 200. I am honored to be a Golden Apple Scholar and look forward to giving back to my community and schools in need," Martin added.

Martin is the daughter of Ken Martin, business teacher and department chair at Woodstock North, and Shannon Martin, kindergarten teacher at Indian Prairie Elementary School in Crystal Lake.

"My husband and I are beyond proud of Mary, not only as her parents but as fellow teachers as well. These students are the future of our education system. We need more highly driven and effective educators and we believe Mary and the other Golden Apple Scholars are ready for the challenge," Shannon Martin said.

Ungaro is headed to Northern Illinois University in the fall seeking certification to become a special education teacher.

"I was really grateful that I was given this opportunity to fulfill my passion for teaching," she said regarding her Golden Apple Scholar selection.

Amy Ungaro, who teaches math at Creekside Middle School, said her daughter's passion for special education became evident while volunteering with the Best Buddies program.

"We couldn't be more proud of Reagan making the decision to become a special education teacher. She has a natural gift for developing meaningful relationships with students who have special needs" she said. "Her patience and compassion will make her an amazing teacher.

To complete the program, recipients must maintain a minimum GPA, obtain their degree and teaching certificate as well as teach at an Illinois school-of-need for five years within seven years of their graduation.