



Old Home Day Committee names Belmont's Citizen of the Year

BY DONNA RHODES

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BELMONT — It's been a longstanding tradition in Belmont for the Old Home Day Committee to recognize a high school senior as the Belmont Good Citizen, and for 2014, it was recent graduate Andrew Mozier who took away top honors through his speech and his answer to an impromptu question last Friday evening.

Twelve candidates were acknowledged for their entries this year, but it was three of those students who delivered their speech before the public and a panel of judges as each vied for scholarship money and the title of Good Citizen.

Held at the Corner Meeting House, the first presentations from the candidates centered on what Belmont meant to them. Matt Leclair was the first to the podium, and said that in 13 years of living in Belmont, he has never once felt out of place. His recent class participation in a clean up day wnet a long way



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Recent BHS graduates Matthew Leclair, Samantha Mackes and Andrew Mozier were commended for their community leadership roles at the annual Belmont Good Citizen reception, sponsored by the Belmont Old Home Day Committee. Mozier was selected as this year's winner but all three received scholarship money for their future endeavors.

toward showing him the true meaning of "community."

"The small deeds of hundreds is what makes this such a great town,"

said Leclair.

Candidate Samantha Mackes said when she was younger, she didn't think Belmont had much to offer young res-

idents, but soon found how wrong she was. She found a town where people truly cared about who she was and what

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she was doing. People who don't see each other for a while will still call to check on others to ask how they are and what they are doing in their lives, Mackes noted.

"You're wanted (here), and they care. The sense of community is so strong," she said. "Every one of us is here for a reason, and needed in the community."

Mozier said he found Belmont to be a town filled with opportunities. He felt the school district was something all could be proud of, one that gives students the best opportunity to succeed at the highest level pos-

sible, and he believes the town is filled with positive encouragement that makes students want to participate in things happening around them.

"Belmont is tight-knit, and the residents are committed to each other, which makes this a wonderful place to live," Mozier said. "The others who are here tonight are all a part of those who make this a great community."

Old Home Day Committee representative Gretta Olson-Wilder then asked each to draw a question from a bowl for their impromptu speech.

Leclair was asked that, if there were to be a community center in Belmont, where would he build it and what would it offer.

He said he felt it would be appropriate to place such a center in the lot beside the Belmont Mill. With the senior center next door, a community center could help draw even more people to the village and bring people of all ages together.

"It could offer a whole lot and add to the park, the mill, and the beautiful downtown we just redid," he said.

Mackes said the question she drew might

seem a bit "unfair," as it pertained to work she has already been involved in — developing a positive program for elementary school children.

"Since October, I have been working with the Boys and Girls Club to implement programs for girls ages 11 to 15," Mackes said. "We deal with self-esteem, bullying and other topics. I think they're a great influence on kids."

For Mozier, he was asked to give his opinion on the most crucial problem facing America today and what he felt could be done about it.

Heading for a career in the medical field, he said healthcare reform was high on his list of issues that need to be addressed. Mozier said that with an aging population he feels doctors will not be reimbursed enough through insurance companies to allow them to accept new patients.

"Is this going to work in 10 years when the number of patients coming in increases," he questioned. "We need to figure out a way to reimburse doctors so they can afford to accept these new patients."

Entertainment for the evening was provided by teacher Dave McDonald and former 2004 Good Citizen Officer Derek Gray of the Belmont Police Department also addressed the candidates.

"What makes a Belmont Good Citizen? Someone people can look up to and, by their

actions, can make a difference for others," Gray said. "I hope I've done that. If I can become a role model, so can all of you."

After careful deliberations, judges Doreen Plimpton, Brian Loanes and Linda Frawley awarded the \$400 scholarship from the Belmont Old Home Day committee to Mozier. For their runner up positions, Olson-Wilder also presented both Mackes and Leclair with checks for \$200.

All three are now invited to hold a place of honor in the Aug. 9 Old Home Day parade.

Other entrants in this year's Belmont Good Citizen program were Ashley Brake, Samuel Chiu, Elijah Gravenhorst, Kieran Harpell, Nyasia Lewis, Shania Mulley, Courtney Pelletier, Mary Kate Russo and Alyssa Woods.