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Lauren Price wins town honor

Good citizens

By HARRISON HAAS

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NOMINEES for the Belmont Old Home Day Committee's Good Citizen Award Program include, front, from left, Kimberly Allen, Danielle Culpon, Kearra Lorette, and Jonna Clark; back row, Lauren Price, Alexander Conway, Ian Shaw, Alvin Nix, and Emmanuel Ham-Ying. HARRISON HAAS/CITIZEN

BELMONT — The Belmont Old Home Day Committee presented its 2012 Good Citizen Award to graduating senior Lauren Price and awarded three others with monetary scholarships.

Tuesday evening's event marked the 45th year of the tradition which began back in 1967 as the Miss Belmont competition. In 1999, it became the Good Citizen Award, open to both males and females.

Price was among nine nominees for the award and she received \$400 from the Old Home Day Committee to go toward college tuition or other expenses. Runners-up Jonna Clark, Kearra Lorette, and Alvin Nix received \$250 each.

Each year, the Belmont Old Home Day Committee presents the Good Citizen Award to a senior of the graduating class at Belmont High School who demonstrates outstanding citizenship, who cares about the community, and who helps those in need.

Students were welcomed by last year's Good Citizen, Courtney Clary, who just completed her freshman year at Vanderbilt University. Clary spoke of her experience while in Belmont and what she has learned since being away.

"Many of the people I have met at college are from all over the country," she said. "They were shocked I knew everyone from my graduating class and couldn't believe that my entire town was proud of me and wanted me to succeed. Don't take that for granted; most people don't have that."

To Clary, Belmont is a special place to live and she encouraged everyone to return home to visit when they can.

Each of the nine nominees explained what Belmont meant to them and why Belmont was special.

Speaking first, without a prepared speech, was Lorette, who moved to Belmont four years ago. Within that short amount of time, she said, she learned what it is like to have family and friends who support her and care about her. Being in Belmont, she has discovered the importance of friendships and how valuable the community is around her.

Going second was Price, who said she believes Belmont has made her into the person she is today and has given her many opportunities. Over the years, through sports, the classroom, and community, she said she has been able to gain a feeling of personal success.

For nominee Ian Shaw, living in Belmont has meant he is part of a community that cares about the achievement of others. He said Belmont is a community that has good schools and teaches students that, if they work hard, they can achieve anything they want in their lives.

Clark entered the school system in sixth grade after being home-schooled. Entering the public school system was one of the scariest moments of her life, she said. Clark soon was greeted with friendly faces and knowledgeable teachers, all of whom provided a positive experience during her time in Belmont.

Senior Kimberly Allen said that being in a small town such as Belmont has allowed her to form relationships with students, teachers, and others in the community. During times of uncertainty, she said, the small class sizes and strong bonds with the teachers and students have helped her — something she may not have had at a larger school.

Moving to Belmont from Massachusetts was senior Danielle Culpan, who said she was grateful to have had the opportunity to grow up in a small community in New Hampshire. From classes to sports, Culpan said Belmont has given her many opportunities while growing up.

Also without a written speech was senior Emmanuel Ham-Ying. Moving around a lot as a child, he said Belmont was the first place where he actually felt comfortable and secure. He found it comforting to be around familiar faces and people who genuinely cared for others in the community.

Living in Belmont all his life, senior Alexander Conway said he has enjoyed many of the small-town perks. No matter what part of town he is in, he said, he feels safe. Conway commended the teachers, who he said care about the education of the students.

Runner-up Nix explained how he has received a great education by being in school, involved at his church, and a member of the local Boy Scouts. Through his experiences, he has learned it is not what you do for yourself but rather what you do for others that makes a difference.

After a brief deliberation, this year's judges, which included David Morse, Diane Clary, and Geraldine Mitchell, named Price the 2012 Good Citizen.

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