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## AAUW-OML awards scholarships to local students

Submitted by Marielle Boortz

Since 1978, AAUW-OML (American Association of University Women-Orinda Moraga Lafayette Branch) has supported education of young women in the community by awarding college scholarships.



Sophia Kofoed

Marielle Riesner-Hansson

Lynn Wolfe

Kate Ye

Photo provided

Since 1998, AAUW-OML has encouraged girls to study and pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) subjects by awarding scholarships for local middle school students to attend the AAUW Tech Trek weeklong summer camp for girls entering eighth grade. And in 2016 AAUW-OML began holding an annual one-day STEM Conference for middle school girls.

AAUW-OML recently awarded its 2020 college and Tech Trek scholarships to local students. The awardees were chosen based on the applications they submitted, each with a written essay, and in-person interviews conducted by members of the AAUW-OML Scholarship or Tech Trek

Committee.

AAUW-OML awarded college scholarships to four graduating high school seniors: Sophia Kofoed (Miramonte), Marielle Riesner-Hansson (Acalanes), Lynn Wolfe (Acalanes) and Kate Ye (Campolindo). Kofoed and Ye each received \$2,000 scholarships. Riesner-Hansson and Wolfe each received \$1,000 scholarships, splitting the \$2,000 AAUW-OML awarded for an Acalanes High School student. The selection criteria for the college scholarships are academic excellence, community service and leadership. The four college scholarship winners are excellent students and have demonstrated leadership and helped others through community service:

Riesner-Hansson is lead Teen Wild Guide at the Oakland Zoo and volunteers at the Moraga Veterinary Hospital and Hospice East Bay thrift shops. Riesner-Hansson will attend University of Nevada, Reno.

Wolfe is Acalanes' Asian American Club president and member of the Acalanes High School Equity Board. She also worked with the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation on a documentary about life in WWII internment camps and for the Oakland Asian Cultural Center she documented artifacts created by Japanese Americans in internment camps. Wolfe will attend University of California, Davis.

Kofoed created the Brain Safety Alliance Committee and has advocated locally, regionally, and nationally for requiring that helmets be worn in women's lacrosse. She also participated in the Miramonte High School Peer Mentoring Program, Link Crew, Public Speaking and Debate Club. Kofoed will attend Saint Mary's College of California.

Ye (a violin player) founded the Music for the Soul nonprofit organization and with the other students in the group played concerts in senior homes and at fundraising events (e.g., for Children's Hospital and California wildfire relief). She also founded the Campolindo High School badminton team and is communications director of Campolindo Peer Tutoring. Ye will attend University of California, Berkeley.

In addition to receiving the AAUW-OML college scholarships, Kofoed and Wolfe participated in AAUW STEM programs: Tech Trek camp and the AAUW-OML STEM Conference.

The Branch selected seven girls to attend Tech Trek camp: Camille Bradley, Helena Linnen and Bea Dean (Stanley MS); Vivian Tolajian and Giorgia Stankus (Joaquin Moraga IS); Deya Murthy and Emma Wong (Orinda IS).

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 situation, AAUW-OML was not able to hold its annual awards event to honor these young women together and the 2020 AAUW Tech Trek camp and STEM Conference were canceled. AAUW-OML delivered certificates and flowers along with the checks to each college scholarship winner. For the selected Tech Trek campers, AAUW-OML provided each with a list of STEM resources and activities that they could pursue in lieu of the Tech Trek camp experience.

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