



NEWS RELEASE
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STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB
AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

Three Stonington High School Seniors Recognized for Interest in Environmental Sciences

STONINGTON, CONN. (September 21, 2026) – The Stonington Garden Club (SGC) has long awarded two scholarships annually to Stonington High School (SHS) seniors pursuing studies in Environmental Sciences (ES) in college. This year, that tradition expanded to three with the debut of the Candy Sanford Memorial Scholarship. The three recipients this year, Sophie Hryn, Finn Meadows, and Camryn Williamson, received their awards at the SHS Senior Awards Night in June.

The Candy Sanford Memorial Scholarship was established by Tom Sanford and his family in memory of his wife, Candy Sanford, a longtime, beloved SGC member and past club president. The award supports a graduating SHS senior pursuing studies in landscape design, horticulture, agricultural sciences, or marine biology, fields that reflect Candy's own passion for the environment and conservation.



L to R: Catherine Ellis (SHS AP Science teacher/ Advisor Environmental Club), Finn Meadows, Sophie Hryn, Camryn Williamson, Tom Sanford, Terri Brennan (SGC Scholarship Comm. Chair)

“One of the purposes of the Stonington Garden Club is to encourage and support interest in conservation and the environment,” said Pamela J. Wright, SGC Co-President. “These scholarship awards were created to do just that by recognizing and supporting high school seniors interested in environmental sciences. This year, we’re especially proud to honor Candy Sanford’s legacy through a scholarship that reflects her own passion for gardening and conservation.”

“In these challenging times for climate-related causes, today’s high school students are increasingly concerned with environmental issues and the impact of climate change,” said Terri Brennan, Chair of the SGC Scholarship Committee. “We are proud to offer awards that recognize a focus on the environment and encourage further studies in this critically important field.”

Scholarship Recipients

Sophie Hryn – Environmental Studies Award

While at SHS, Sophie co-founded the Environmental Club, growing it to more than 25 members and launching a school-wide recycling program and pollinator pathway garden on campus. She has also spent years volunteering with Clean Sound and Harbors, monitoring water health in the Mystic River, its estuary, and Long Island Sound. Sophie will attend Northeastern University this fall to study biochemistry and environmental science, continuing the environmental work she began in Stonington.

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Finn Meadows – Environmental Awareness Award

Finn served as Vice President of the SHS Environmental Club and was a lead organizer of the 2026 Groton Public Library Earth Day Expo, spearheading vendor outreach that helped secure roughly 60 vendors and draw more than a thousand attendees. His love of nature began in his family's backyard garden, growing into a commitment to environmental stewardship through school and community involvement. Finn will attend Connecticut College this fall, where he plans to stay engaged in environmental action before pursuing law school to advocate for the environment in the legal and political arenas.

Camryn Williamson – Candy Sanford Memorial Scholarship

A member of the SHS Environmental Club, Camryn interned with Sea Grant at UConn Avery Point, studying oyster aquaculture's impact on the local community. She also engaged with the Alliance for the Mystic Watershed and represented her peers at the Youth Climate Summit. Camryn will attend San Diego State University to study environmental engineering, with plans to return to Stonington each summer to volunteer with local environmental organizations.

About the Scholarships

The Club's history with the ES department at Stonington High School has included providing funds for materials needed for their outdoor gardens, but the Club wanted to do more. Determined to help and encourage local high schoolers, the Club worked closely with the SHS Science Teacher and the officers of the SGC to establish a scholarship award for a graduating senior in the spring of 2017. Now in its 10th year, SGC offers two founding scholarship awards, the Environmental Studies Award (\$1,000) and the Environmental Awareness Award (\$1,000), joined this year by the new Candy Sanford Memorial Scholarship (\$2,000).

About the Stonington Garden Club

Founded in 1926, the Stonington Garden Club is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization whose purpose is to educate and encourage interest in the environment and conservation, support community projects, and stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening. For 100 years, the club has had a lasting and positive impact on the community, and its members take great pride in the Stonington community and its environs. For more information or to inquire about membership, please visit www.stoningtongardenclub.org.

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