

Alton Pride Issues First Scholarship

by Dawn Strickland
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ALTON – Alton Pride is excited to announce the winner of its first scholarship – Maddox Karnes of Edwardsville High School. The 2023 Alton Pride Scholarship packet was released on social media and sent to 12 regional school districts to be dispersed to their high school students in September 2022.

Students applying needed to be a senior in high school, have a minimum GPA of 2.50 on a 4.0 scale, and a member of or an ally for the LGBTQIA+ community. Each applicant had to submit a 300-word essay describing how they contribute to the benefit of the LGBTQIA+ community and had to complete a minimum of 4 hours of volunteer work with Alton Pride or a non-profit community organization. Applications were due,

post marked, by January 31, 2023. Each application was reviewed to ensure they met the requirements for the scholarship and then the essays were issued to a committee for anonymous review. The committee then chose the winning essay without knowing any other information about the application, not even a name.

Maddox wrote a moving essay about wanting to provide a voice to those less often heard. His essay specifically focused on one opinion piece he wrote over the controversy surrounding Drag Time Story Hours. He said many students and teachers reached out to him expressing their thanks for him taking the initiative to research the matter. “After that I realized how I could truly serve my community. The impact of being seen, even in something as small as a school newspaper, has power. Now I know how I can, and will continue to, do my part as a queer person: by sharing out stories.”

On April 5, 2023, Maddox was presented with a Scholarship Certificate and a check for \$500 during the monthly Alton Pride Board Meeting. Board members shared with Maddox and his mother how his essay spoke to them and how powerful it was. “You are an amazing young man who is going far in this world, and we couldn’t be prouder of you,” said President Nicci Kincer. Maddox will be attending Missouri University in the fall and majoring in Journalism.