

Laila Blakeny and Megan Yarborough Are Rotary Club Of Alton-Godfrey Students Of The Month

by Submitted by Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club
May 11 2023 3:07 PM



ALTON - Laila Blakeny of Alton High School and Megan Yarborough of Alton High School were honored as Students of the Month of May at a recent meeting of the Rotary Club of Alton-Godfrey held at Gentelin's on Broadway Restaurant.

Laila Blakeny is the daughter of Kirk and Tanisha Blakeny. Laila is a senior at Alton High School. She wants to thank the Rotary Club for allowing her to be a Rotary student of the month. At a young age, her family taught her the importance of education. Since kindergarten, she has been on the high honor roll and was inducted into the National Honors Society. She plans on continuing this streak in college. In her free time she plays basketball. She's been playing basketball for the past 12 years, starting at the age of 6. She has played for Alton High for the past 2 years with her prior 2 years at Lutheran North in St. Louis, MO. Finishing with an incredible and record-breaking season at 32-2! She says the experience playing for Alton was unbelievable. Just the amount of support the community gave us was incredible!

Outside of basketball, she has been a part of community service her whole life. Community service is something everyone should participate in, she says. Oftentimes people look at it as a punishment, but it's really an amazing opportunity to be able to change the world. Provide necessities for people that don't have all they need. Also, the biggest part to her about serving the community is seeing the smiles on people's faces. Sometimes, that's all people need is to know someone else cares for and about them. Some community service events she has done for years are food, clothing, toys, Christmas and Thanksgiving drives with her grandmother and her non-profit organization. She has cleaned churches, helped daycare services, filed paperwork, helped a non-profit organization with their online marketing, planted flowers and cleaned and picked up trash in many communities. Community service has also taught Laila great aspects of life, like being a leader, and Laila has met lots of great people. But it also showed her that life is not all about yourself!

In the spring, Laila will be attending The University of Dubuque, Iowa. She will be continuing her basketball career also while majoring in Sports Management & Business and minoring in Psychology. Laila is planning on going to graduate school to be a graduate assistant coach for a team and also to get higher degrees and education. After Laila graduates, she wants to coach her own basketball team and be able to give me knowledge about sports and also show how sports have helped me grow as a young woman. Laila wants to be able to mentor and help young adults get through life. Laila has twin brothers who were born with autism, so she has a firsthand opportunity to watch and learn more about special needs. Laila feels the world is lacking education for special-needs children. So one of my goals is to be able to open up a special needs school. Hopefully, expanding these schools globally. Their education is just as important and shouldn't be a cost of having a disability. Clearly, Laila has some ambitious goals, so my future requires a lot of hard work and dedication. Receiving this award will really help her achieve this goal.

Megan Yarborough is the daughter of Mark and Tina Yarborough. Megan is an Alton High School senior, and is awarded the Rotary Student of the Month for May. A

considerable amount of experiences have occurred in her life. Although, the most monumental of them transpired during her time at school. From the beginning of her first year to the end of her senior year, she was enrolled in several dual credit classes through Lewis and Clark Community College. As a result, she will be entering college as a sophomore. On top of those classes, many were honors, and some were advanced placement. Since her first year, she has found satisfaction in classes deemed “more rigorous” than their regular counterparts. She put in hard work throughout the day and night, and her discipline has earned her a 4.432 GPA she has maintained throughout her senior year. Her hard work was recognized by Alton High School as well as the state of Illinois. During her senior year, she was acknowledged as an Illinois State Scholar and was a Silver Medallion recipient.

While academics are highly important to her, experiencing school through various clubs is a beneficial way to utilize time for her. During her freshman year, she was part of the Student Council and Art Club, as well as the Junior Varsity Cheerleading team; however, this was at her former school, which was East Alton-Wood River. In her sophomore year, Megan had just transferred to Alton High School, and the school year was online for the most part, meaning she did not know the numerous clubs the school had. It was in her junior year she realized the vast number of organizations there. At the start of her junior year, she joined clubs such as the American sign language club and biology club. She has remained an active member of the biology club in her senior year, and it has been one of her favorite clubs to take part in. Moreover, she was initiated into the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta in her senior year. She has grown exponentially fond of the National Honor Society and the activities she has participated in through the association.

Through the National Honor Society, she had the chance to help out with several community service projects. Outside of the National Honor Society, she volunteers at Treehouse Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Dow, Illinois. She has been helping there since her junior year. Their facility takes in injured animals and helps them back to good health. When she is there, she helps clean the areas the animals are staying in and gives them their food. She has been able to see many animals she did not ever think she would get to experience up close. She has found her time there extremely rewarding and hopes to volunteer at more rehabilitation centers in college.

Megan decided to study at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. At the university, there is an Honors Program that she received admittance to. The Honors Program will allow her numerous opportunities that she intends to use to grow her portfolio and set herself up for future success. She plans to attain a degree in biology. She believes the world we live in now has been declining in health, and with her degree, she will use her

knowledge to work toward a better environment for all life forms. She is ambitiously waiting to begin working to stabilize wildlife and make the world more comfortable for every species inhabiting the Earth.

Laila and Megan each received plaques recognizing their achievements from Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club President Antione Williams.