

Alton Middle School Students Recognized as Optimist Students of the Month

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - During their regular meeting on Jan. 16, 2024, the Alton Community Unit School District #11 Board of Education recognized the Optimist Students of the Month for December and January.

Alton Middle School (AMS) students Dean Kirkland and Malak Seddati were named the December and January Middle School Optimist Students of the Month, respectively. AMS Principal Dr. Cindy Inman introduced both students and shared a few remarks from their teachers.



Dean Kirkland is a seventh grade student at AMS. He plays football and participates in honors and jazz band in addition to the regular AMS band program as a trumpet player. Throughout the fall semester, he received straight As and quickly made a name for himself as a helpful, kind student.

“He has shown to his teachers and peers what it means to be a team player both in the classroom and on the field,” Inman said. “Alton Middle School is grateful to have Dean as an example of excellence in our learning community.”

His teachers note that Kirkland is “cheerful” and regularly helps his fellow students with their lockers, greets students at the door, and has proven himself as a peer tutor. He is quick to volunteer to help his classmates understand difficult concepts and “points of confusion” in the classroom.

“Dean is a wonderful, respectful, thoughtful and kind young man. He has been one of the peer tutors in the class and assists several students with points of confusion,” said Lisa Lovett, Kirkland’s AVID teacher. “He actively participates in class, asks for help if he is unsure of something and assists others if they need help grasping the concept...Dean is an outstanding example of how an AVID student should carry himself.”

Kirkland thanked his parents and coaches for their encouragement. Optimist Students of the Month receive a \$25 gift card to Target and can choose where to donate an additional \$25. Kirkland decided to donate to the 5A’s Animal Shelter in Alton.



Malak Seddati is a sixth grade student at AMS. She participates in the band and orchestra program and is a member of the STEM Club, Sewing Club and Student Council. She also serves as a student representative for the sixth grade class, so she works closely with teachers to discuss what the sixth graders need.

“Malak is an outstanding student at AMS,” Inman said. “She is only in the sixth grade, but she excels in everything. She is a caring young woman who strives to lead by example for her peers.”

Seddati’s teachers note that she is compassionate and respectful. She greets other students and is “always willing to help others,” which she often does as a leader both in and out of the classroom.

“Malak always has a positive, can-do attitude. She works hard at everything she does, whether it’s academic or extracurricular. She is a role model for other sixth graders,” said Joe Winkelmann, ELA teacher and student council advisor. “Malak is a wonderful example of Alton and what Alton stands for.”

Seddati thanked her parents for their support and her cat Garfield “because he’s such a great friend.” She received her \$25 gift card to Target and chose to donate the additional \$25 to the Catholic Children’s Home in Alton.