

Alton Students Recognized As Role Models

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - The Alton Community Unit School District #11 Board of Education recognized Niyam Patel and Peter Milien II as February's Optimist Students of the Month during the Board's regular meeting on Feb. 20, 2024.

Dr. Cindy Inman, principal of Alton Middle School, introduced Niyam Patel and shared a few remarks from his teachers. Patel is a straight-A student who plays baseball and basketball. He wants to be an aerospace engineer one day.\



“He is an amazing student and he’s an amazing athlete,” Inman said. “Niyam is an excellent example of what Alton Middle School students are like each and every day.”

Patel’s teachers and coaches said he has a “positive attitude” and he is “a joy to coach.” He often leads by example and shows great sportsmanship by cheering on his teammates and smiling through the entire game. Patel loves science and helping his neighbors and family.

“Niyam, you are a very hard-working young man that strives to do your best in all areas of life,” said Amy Smith, Patel’s social studies teacher. “You’re kind, respectful and have a great sense of humor. I’m always impressed with your positivity and I am so happy that you are a part of my class every day.”

Patel thanked his parents for their encouragement. Optimist Students of the Month each receive a \$25 gift card and can choose where to donate an additional \$25. Patel donated his money to St. Jude Children's Hospital.

East Elementary Principal Lanea Deconcini introduced Peter Milien II and noted that his peers often ask themselves, "What would Peter do?" before making decisions. He is a high honor roll student who plays basketball and participates in the Young Authors program. He volunteers with the Jayson Tatum Foundation and the Be a Bridge Foundation.



“I don’t know if you’ve had the pleasure of meeting Peter, but he is truly an amazing and outstanding young man,” Deconcini said. “Peter is a student that everyone loves, students and staff alike.”

Milien’s teachers described him as “a leader and role model” who “truly values his education.” He is planning to start a podcast and wants to become a sports analyst, NBA commentator or math professor. While he has some time before he has to decide where he will attend college, he already has it narrowed down to Harvard, Duke or another D1 school.

“He takes pride in his community. He stated that helping in his community is a must,” Deconcini added. “Peter was chosen as East’s Optimist Student of the Month because he embodies all the characteristics of a model Redbird and is an outstanding student.”

Milien chose to donate his \$25 to the Be a Bridge Foundation. He said he chose to support them because “he believes in their vision to serve his community.”