



Police Foundation: Scholarship Program

By Tom Murphy (August 2013)

The mission statement of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation includes the words "to enhance the safety of our community...." We accomplish this in several ways including the support of various programs aimed at the youth of the city. The Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation is dedicated to helping our youth strive for academic and career excellence... we believe that our youth have the power to shape the future of our city.

In January of this year we announced the launch of the **Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation Scholarship Program** which would award two \$1,000 grants to students from within the local community who were seeking to enhance their future with tertiary education.

A scholarship committee made up of Foundation Board members and local university educators was established and the scholarships were announced through the Palm Beach County District Schools and the Police Department.

Applicants were required to complete an extensive application package, submit school transcripts, a record of community service and letters of reference. They were also required to write an essay on "How a Higher Education Degree will affect my life." They needed to have a graduating GPA of at least 3.0 and a letter of acceptance from a University or secondary Technical School.

At the end of the school year several applications were received and the Committee began the task of selecting two individuals who would receive the scholarship grants. It was a difficult task as most of the applicants were highly qualified.

The committee met and reviewed each application and narrowed it down to two semifinalists who were then called in for personal one-on-one interviews. Both interviews were very positive and the Committee then confirmed the following scholarship recipients:

- Ms. Erika L. Peeples who graduated from Dwyer High School with a 3.6 GPA and number 49 in her class of 514 students. Erika will attend University of North Florida in Jacksonville to pursue studies in Nursing. Erika was described in one of her reference letters as having the “ability, motivation, desire and communication skills to be successful in college and in life.”
- Ms. Alexa N. Wingate who also graduated from Dwyer High School with a 3.8 GPA and number 13 in the class of 514 students. Alexa will attend the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg to pursue studies in Criminology. Alexa’s references said that she “is artistic and creative while remaining analytical and willing to do the hard work of research.”

The Foundation believes that education enriches the lives, skills and abilities of our community and its residents. It is very pleased to have these two young ladies receiving the scholarship grants and wishes them much success in their future pursuits.

This year's first awards will surely lead to a continuation of the scholarship program in the coming years.

Tom Murphy has been president of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation, Inc. since its inception in 2007. Before helping to form the foundation he was a marketing executive with the IBM Corporation and earlier a member of the Nassau County (NY) Police Department.