Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation Selects 2017 Scholarship Winners

Eleven cancer survivors in New York, New Jersey, and Florida awarded scholarships

New York (June 13, 2017) - The Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation is pleased to announce the 2017 recipients of its annual college scholarships for cancer patients and survivors. These scholarships were established to offer hope beyond cancer, providing financial support so cancer patients and survivors can attend college and live out their dreams. This year 11 young men and women were selected and each will receive $2,000, renewable for up to an accumulative $8,000 over four years. To qualify, applicants must be residents of North Florida, South Georgia, the five boroughs of New York City, or Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic and Union counties in New Jersey and have been diagnosed with cancer before the age of 21. Winners are chosen based on leadership ability, academic record, moral character, and financial need.

“These scholarships are truly an extension of our mission to BE THERE for patients and families,” said Tom Coughlin, Executive Vice President of Operations for the Jacksonville Jaguars and founder of the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation. “I’m inspired by the stories of these exceptional young men and women. I hope the winners of this year’s scholarships chase their dreams and educational goals with the same courage and determination they faced cancer.”

Since 2002 the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation has awarded 55 scholarships totaling over $300,000 to cancer survivors in New York, New Jersey, and North Florida.

This year’s winners are:

Anheuser Busch InBev Scholarship Recipient
Allyn Lilien
Diagnosed: Acute myeloid leukemia AML in 2007 with relapse in February 2009
Academics: Westwood Regional High School 2017, 4.22 GPA
Extracurricular: Captain Varsity Lacrosse, Math Tutor, Summer Camp Counselor
Awards: National Honor Society, All League Lacrosse Player
College & Major: Montclair State University, Education & Special Ed

The National Football League Scholarship Recipient
Thomas Cronin
Diagnosed: Acute lymphocytic leukemia ALL in 2012
Academics: St. Joseph by the Sea High School, 3.0 GPA  
Extracurricular: Holy Name Society, Team leukemia, WSJS News Program  
Awards: Catholic Charities Shining Star Award  
College & Major: St John’s University, Accounting

The Tisch Family Scholarship Recipient  
Tara Ryan  
Diagnosed: Acute lymphocytic leukemia ALL in 2004  
Academics: Waldwick High School, 3.4 GPA  
Extracurricular: Varsity Volleyball, Lacrosse & Track, Relay for Life, Photography Club  
Awards: 2nd Team All-League Volleyball  
College & Major: Penn State University, Psychology

First Data Scholarship Recipient  
Jeyson Navarro  
Diagnosed: Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, July 2001  
Academics: Harrison High School, 3.31 GPA  
Extracurricular: Soccer, ESL Club, Peer Leader  
College & Major: Essex Community College, Business

The NY Football Giants Scholarship Recipient  
William “Billy” Frasco  
Diagnosed: Acute lymphocytic leukemia ALL in 2014  
Academics: Paramus High School, 4.4 GPA  
Extracurricular: Relay for Life, Class President, Marching Band, Jazz Band  
Awards: US Presidential Scholars Program,NJ Boys State Candidate, Notre Dame University Summer Scholar  
College & Major: Boston College, Undecided

Sonja and Paul Tudor Jones Scholarship Recipient  
Claudia Sroka  
Diagnosed: Acute lymphocytic leukemia ALL in 2009  
Academics: West Milford High School, 3.85 GPA  
Extracurricular: JV Soccer, Basketball & Softball, Class Vice-President  
Awards: National Honor Society, NJIT Team Awards, Johns Hopkins Talented Youth Award  
College & Major: New York University, Biomedical Engineering

Visa Scholarship Recipient  
Devanshi Gami  
Diagnosed: Acute lymphocytic leukemia ALL in 2009  
Academics: McNair Academic High School, 3.7 GPA  
Extracurricular: Environmental Club, Science Fair, Spanish Club, JV Tennis, Internship at Jersey City Medical Center  
Awards: Honors Student  
College & Major: Rutgers University, Nursing
The Villa Family Scholarship Recipient
Brianna Commerford
Diagnosed: Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Stage IV, 2007
Academics: Westwood Jr. Sr. High School, 3.8 GPA
Extracurricular: Relay for Life, Varsity Track & Cheerleading
Awards: LLS Girl of the Year
College & Major: University of Miami, Fall 2016, Broadcast Journalism/Political Science

Commander Rick Murray Memorial Scholarship Recipient
Mateo Seslija
Diagnosed: Testicular Mixed Germ Cell Tumor, July 2016
Academics: Mandarin High School 2017, 3.67 GPA, ranked 68 out of 380 students, dually enrolled at FSCJ
Extracurricular: Soccer Team, Medical Academic Student, Habitat for Humanity
Awards: Taekwondo Second Degree Black Belt
College & Major: Florida State College of Jacksonville, Fall 2017, University of South Florida, Spring 2018, Chemistry

Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Scholarship Recipient
Jessica Mauch
Diagnosed: Ewings Sarcoma, March 2015
Academics: Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology 2016, 3.78 GPA, ranked 21 out of 229 students
Florida State College of Jacksonville, currently
Extracurricular: Cure Search Walk Team, Competitive Cheer Team
Awards: National Honor Society, Early Childhood Education Certification
College & Major: Florida State College of Jacksonville, Child Development/Elementary Education

Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Scholarship Recipient
Bradley Ratzlaff
Diagnosed: B-Cell Lymphoblastic Lymphoma May 2014
Academics: Orange Park High School 2014, 3.04 GPA
Florida State College of Jacksonville, currently
Extracurricular: Baseball, Basketball, & Football, Freshman Connection, Boy Scouts Star Scout, Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Junior Ambassador
Awards: Lettered in Baseball, Basketball, & Football, OPHS Ring of Honor, Raider Award
College & Major: Florida State College of Jacksonville, Child Psychology

If you are interested in sponsoring a survivor scholarship or donating to the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation, please visit www.tcjayfund.org to learn more.

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About the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation
The Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation was created in 1996 in honor of Jay McGillis. Jay developed leukemia while playing for Coach Coughlin at Boston College. In the eight months between Jay’s diagnosis and the day he lost his battle with cancer, the Coughlin family saw first-hand the physical, emotional and financial strains
the illness caused the McGillis Family. Coach Coughlin vowed, if he ever had the chance, he would create a way to help families with children tackling cancer.

OUR MISSION is to help families tackle childhood cancer by providing comprehensive financial, emotional and practical support. From diagnosis to recovery and beyond, we are part of the team, allowing parents to solely focus on their child’s well-being. Our goal is to BE THERE for parents facing the unthinkable so they can be there for their families. www.tcjayfund.org; @tcjayfund