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**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Present the Accessible Community Task Force student recognition awards

**DEPARTMENT:** Transportation, Engineering and Development

**SUBMITTED BY:** Peter Zibble, Operations Manager

**BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:**

The Accessible Community Task Force (ACTF) annually recognizes the efforts of students in the community who make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

**BACKGROUND:**

The annual recognition of area students for their exemplary service and outstanding commitment to removing barriers and stereotypes for fellow students with disabilities has been a long-standing tradition of the City of Naperville. This year’s effort has been led by the ACTF which is a citizen committee formed in August 2016 to compliment the efforts of the Advisory Commission on Disabilities (ACD). Whereas the ACD focuses on City of Naperville facilities, programs and operations, the ACTF reaches out into the community to assist individuals and private companies in the areas of transportation, young adult and youth initiatives, business compliance, employment, education/awareness and collaboration

**DISCUSSION:**

All award recipients were nominated by teachers and/or administrators from Community Unit School District 203 and Indian Prairie School District 204. This year, the ACTF would like to recognize six outstanding students. The awards include a personalized certificate of appreciation and a gift card. Councilman Paul Hinterlong, who serves as the City Council Liaison to the ACD, will make the presentation.

### Elaine Catanzaro

Elaine, a junior at Naperville Central High School, is an Adaptive PE leader. In her Introduction to Teaching Course, she has expressed an interest in becoming a Special Education teacher and was incredibly helpful to others in the class. She advocates for fellow students with disabilities and is both a friend and helper to many of her peers.

### Cassandra Knowles

Cassandra, a senior at Waubonsie Valley High School, is an honor roll student and active member of the Peer Partners program at WVHS's Adaptive PE classes. She is looked at as a leader in this class by both her teachers and peers and spoke at WVHS's incoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade night about this program to spread awareness and encourage incoming students to join. She will be majoring in Special Education at Aurora University and, in preparation for this career, has shadowed weekly in various classrooms this entire school year.

### Talia Mayer

Talia, a senior at Neuqua Valley High School, is a member of Best Buddies and is an active member of the Peer Partners program at NVHS's Adaptive PE classes. She assists daily in NVHS's AIM classroom and has dedicated much of her high school career serving students with disabilities. She is employed as a caretaker outside of school. At her gymnastics club, she has started a program for students with disabilities. Upon graduation, she plans to pursue a degree in Special Education.

### Faith Nadherny

Faith, a student at Connections Transition Services, is an excellent student and Special Olympics athlete. As part of her vocational program, she works at Little Shepherd Day School in Naperville where she is responsible for preparing lunchtime catering orders. Known for her strong work ethic and kindness, she takes extra care to provide any special accommodations for students with special dietary needs.

### Michael "MJ" Palmquist

MJ, a senior at Metea Valley High School, has been an outstanding student as well as an engaged one, involved in numerous activities. While in the TEDx Club, his speech "Inclusion vs. Isolation" was thought provoking and engaging. He has been a co-chair of the Special Olympics Youth Activation Committee and is now a Global Messenger for Special Olympics Illinois. He is a 4-sport athlete in Special Olympics and a member of the Chicago Blackhawks Special Hockey team. He is a member of the USA men's Unified Football Team competing this summer for the Special Olympics World Unified Cup. He plans to attend STEPS Transition Program, College of DuPage and work towards becoming a Global Ambassador for Special Olympics International.

### Peter Sotir

Peter, a senior at Naperville North High school, is an active participant in Best Buddies, Special Olympics, and the NNHS track and tennis teams. He is an entrepreneur with two businesses: Peter's Kitchen, a dessert company, and Earn with A Purpose, an online company that employs individuals with disabilities.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The city provides each award recipient with a \$50 Downtown Naperville gift card.