



LOCAL STUDENTS SELECTED FOR \$14,000 GOLDEN LEAF FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

ROCKY MOUNT, N.C., (June 22, 2023) - Today, the Golden LEAF Foundation announced that 215 rural North Carolina students were selected to receive up to a \$14,000 Golden LEAF Scholarship, including 11 in Caldwell County.

High school seniors entering college as first year students are eligible for a \$3,500 scholarship each year for up to four years of undergraduate study at a participating four-year North Carolina college or university. Community college transfer students are eligible for \$3,500 a year for up to three years of undergraduate study.

Recipients from rural or economically distressed North Carolina counties are selected based on future career goals and an expressed intent to contribute to the state's rural communities upon graduation from college.

The Golden LEAF Foundation established the Golden LEAF Scholarship Program to broaden educational opportunities and provide support to students from rural counties with the goal that after graduation recipients will return and contribute back to rural communities. The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) administers the program and selects students for awards.

"We are proud to award scholarships to hardworking and bright students with deep roots in their rural communities," said Scott T. Hamilton, Golden LEAF Foundation President, Chief Executive Officer. "These students were selected out of a pool of more than 1,700 applicants. We look forward to the future success of these scholarship recipients as they follow their education pursuits and develop into North Carolina's next generation of rural leaders."

Scholarship recipients may also apply for the [Golden LEAF Rural Internship Initiative](#). The Rural Internship Initiative provides Golden LEAF Scholars with professional work experience related to their career field in a rural North Carolina community. The Golden LEAF Foundation provides funding to pay interns \$15/hour for up to 400 hours of work. Internships take place over 8-10 weeks, between June and August.

"Congratulations to Alana, Abigail, Yesenia, Avyn, Jessica, Dora, Ashley, Paige, Kaelyn, Brittney, and Ella on receiving a Golden LEAF Scholarship," said Senator Ralph Hise. "It is because of students like you from all across the district that I have confidence in the future of our rural communities."

"I'm so excited to hear that we have 11 students from Caldwell County receiving the Golden LEAF Scholarship," said Senator Proctor. "This is a tremendous honor. We will all benefit from the knowledge and skills these students will bring back to rural North Carolina communities."

"Congratulations to the students from Caldwell County for receiving this award," said Representative Destin Hall. "Alana, Abigail, Yesenia, Avyn, Jessica, Dora, Ashley, Paige, Kaelyn, Brittney, and Ella have already demonstrated leadership and strong commitment to the community. I look forward to hearing of their future success."

The newly selected 2023-24 Golden LEAF Scholarship recipients are as follows:

Caldwell County

Name	High School/ Community College	College/ University
Alana Black	South Caldwell High School	Gardner-Webb University
Abigail Bumgarner	Caldwell Career Center Middle College High School	Catawba College
Yesenia Dela Sancha	Caldwell Early College High School	UNC - Chapel Hill
Avyn Gilbert	South Caldwell High School	Appalachian State University
Jessica Haga	South Caldwell High School	Appalachian State University
Dora Hagaman	West Caldwell High School	Appalachian State University
Ashley Hernandez	Caldwell Early College High School	UNC - Greensboro
Paige Money	Caldwell Early College High School	Lees-McRae College
Kaelyn Setzer	South Caldwell High School	North Carolina State University
Brittney Trevino Morin	Caldwell Community College	Appalachian State University
Ella Younce	Caldwell Early College High School	UNC - Charlotte

About Golden LEAF Foundation:

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to receive a portion of North Carolina's funding from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. For more than 20 years, Golden LEAF has worked to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

The Foundation has provided lasting impact to tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and rural areas of the state by helping create 67,000 jobs, over \$720 million dollars in new payrolls and more than 95,000 workers trained or retrained for higher wages. Golden LEAF has provided 6,466 scholarships totaling more than \$45 million to students from rural communities attending North Carolina's colleges and universities.

For more information about Golden LEAF and our programs, please visit our website at www.goldenleaf.org.

About North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority:

North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) administers the program on behalf of the Golden LEAF Foundation. Established in 1965, NCSEAA is the State agency that promotes access to higher education by administering financial aid and savings programs, informing students and families about paying for college, teaching educators about financial aid administration and advocating for resources to support students.