



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

ROCKY MOUNT, N.C., (June 27, 2024) - 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 six in Rutherford 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 recipients will return and contribute to rural communities after graduation. 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 nearly 2,000 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 per hour for up to 400 hours of work. Internships take place between May and August.

"Congratulations to the hardworking students who were awarded the Golden LEAF scholarship," said Representative Tim Moore, the Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives. "Your dedication and academic accomplishments have distinguished you among your peers, and I am confident you have a bright future ahead of you."

"In rural communities like my district, having a workforce that is ready and able to take on the challenges of tomorrow is invaluable," said Senator Timothy Moffitt. "Thanks to scholarship programs like those offered by the Golden LEAF Foundation, students in rural counties like ours have a chance to get a good education and then take what they've learned and return home to impact and transform our community."

“I offer my sincere appreciation to these exceptional students for earning the Golden LEAF Scholarship,” said Representative Jake Johnson. “Your hard work has paid off, and I have no doubt it will yield benefits for years to come. It’s because of you that I have hope in a strong future for our rural communities.”

The newly selected 2024-25 Golden LEAF Scholarship recipients from Rutherford County are as follows:

Name	College Name	High School
Josie Conner	UNC - Chapel Hill	Rutherford Early College High School
Kamryn Curtis	UNC - Asheville	Rutherford Early College High School
Jordan Dixon	Wingate University	East Rutherford High School
Cora Goforth	UNC - Chapel Hill	East Rutherford High School
Mackenzie Hernandez	North Carolina State University	Rutherford Early College High School
Bethany Strange	Montreat College	Community College Transfer

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 25 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 68,000 jobs, more than \$780 million in new payrolls, and more than 98,000 workers trained or retrained for higher wages. For more information about Golden LEAF and our programs, please visit our website at 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.

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