



LELWD Awards Two Pagacik Scholarships

LITTLETON – The Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments awarded scholarships in memory of Denise M. Pagacik to two Littleton High School seniors this year – Aria Patel and John (Jax) Richards.

Aria graduated with a 4.95 grade point average and plans to study biomedical engineering at Tufts University. Jax graduated with a 4.31 GPA and will attend Montana State University for paleontology.

“Aria and Jax are not only outstanding students, but they also understand the importance of giving back to their community,” said Nick Lawler, LELWD’s general manager. “We are thrilled to awards scholarships to two students who embody the spirit of Denise Pagacik.”

This scholarship was created in memory of Denise, the late wife of LELWD Commissioner Ivan Pagacik. A Littleton resident for more than 25 years, she was a loving mother who is remembered for her selfless commitment to the community and helping others.

The \$2,000 scholarship is an annual, merit-based scholarship that focuses on rewarding a highly motivated high school senior interested in the fields of engineering or environmental sciences. The scholarship recognizes the positive impact that Denise had on the community by helping Littleton students achieve their career goals.

Aria’s dream is a career in medicine as a physician and medical researcher. She plans to focus on regenerative medicine research, specifically the creation of biomaterials as a replacement for skin grafts and damaged tissues and organs.

She also plans to continue volunteering with hopes of giving her time at hospitals and clinics to learn how to support patients. Giving back to her community was a central part of her life during high school. She served as class treasurer, volunteered to keep up the garden around the high school, joined community cleanups and ran the Craft Committee that creates and donates handmade items for local humane shelters.

Aria said one of her fondest memories growing up in Littleton was the 300th anniversary parade, during which she was part of a group that did a traditional Bollywood dance in front of the Taj Mahal float. She said hearing the cheers and encouragement from the crowd was a feeling she won’t forget and one she now realizes was pride in the supportive community of Littleton.

“Reflecting on what I’ve learned from community service over the years, I want to have a career filled with connection and collaboration,’ she said. “Drawing from my childhood growing up in an immigrant, multigenerational household, I feel inspired to bridge gaps between cultures and generations in the future.”

Jax said he has learned about the importance of community service through this father, who spent 25 years in the U.S. Army as an engineer officer. Jax saw firsthand the selflessness of his father, but also the sacrifices his own family made to support his dad’s career choice.

“While it was very painful for me to be separated from my dad for long periods of time during deployments, as I got older, I was also able to appreciate that he and others are willing to protect our freedoms and our country in such noble ways eliciting a sense of pride in me,” he said. “As a result of living through the sacrifice, I feel that has given me a stronger sense of understanding and gratefulness for what we have as a people and a nation. It makes me also want to serve and make a difference.”

Jax plans to attend college for Paleontology and then enter the U.S. Air Force with hopes of becoming a search and rescue helicopter pilot. While in school Jax will also participate in the Air Force ROTC program.

“Overall, the Air Force provides the unique opportunity of combining my interests in service, engineering, and aviation in one ideal employer allowing me to serve my country and make a difference,’ Jax said.

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