



The Lew Williams & Leila Sulkes Scholarship Recipients (Scholarships for women in undergraduate or graduate degree programs)

For the 2017-2018 academic year, the Freehold Area Branch of AAUW awarded three scholarships!

The Awards for the 2017-2018 academic year were announced at our September 2017 Branch Meeting. Susan Hughes, Chair of the Scholarship Committee presented the Lew Williams & Leila Sulkes Scholarship Awards to three women of exceptional ability. Susan thanked the Board for agreeing to three scholarships this year; she thanked the Scholarship Committee for their input on selecting this year's winners; and introduced the new Chair, Kathy Cortes. Susan said what an honor it has been to introduce the Scholarship Winners and be able to provide three \$2000 awards this year. The winners had much in common: they give back to the community, they are passionate about their careers, they are teachers, one and all they love children, and care about society and the world.

From left to right: Lesley Saunders, Jessica Grill & Amber Williams



Lesley Saunders is an undergraduate student at Georgian Court University working towards her Bachelors in English with a Teaching Certificate for K through 6, including teaching students with disabilities, and Middle School English and Social Studies. Lesley has experience tutoring students on the autism spectrum and those who have English language difficulties. Lesley is an English immigrant to America and has lived here eight years with her husband, Steven. She gave a very emotional shout out to America and our country's opportunities for higher education that were not available to her back in England, although the English class structure has loosened, since she was a younger woman.

She also gave a shout out to her husband, who supports her totally as she finishes up her degree next year. As she said, this scholarship award will allow her to "get across the finish line." Many words were used to describe Lesley by her professors. One particular word was used by both. They said that Lesley could see connections like those between ideas and themes. (Perhaps longer life experiences allowed her to see connections that younger people might not.) Her professors also described Lesley as prepared, keen to learn (a lifelong learner), passionate; and a person with the talent to share ideas and bring along her classmates. (as a teacher might say ...working well with others!)

Jessica Grill is a Masters student at Miami University of Ohio, pursuing a Masters in Biology. She is in a part-time hybrid-style distance-based program offered through a partnership with Miami University and the Wildlife Conservation Society. Jessica has worked at the Philadelphia Zoo, and presently works as an assistant helping to invigorate the recently reinstated PINES - the Pinelands Institute for Natural and Environmental Studies. Jessica came down many different roads, where she was serendipitously presented with many opportunities that led her to a focus on Environmental & Conservation Education. Jessica is green, and not just environmentally; she lives her truth. She loves teaching and children, as do all our winners. She is inspired by her mom, Sue, who is a single mother of four grown children, and is also a great believer in education for all her kids, including herself. Jessica has been described by the professionals who know her to be passionate, diligent and resourceful.

Amber Williams is a Masters student at Georgian Court University and has been accepted for a teaching job at a Howell public school starting next year. Amber has a Bachelors of Fine Arts and an Early Childhood Teaching Certificate. Moving from ART to TEACHING was an unexpected turn for Amber, but now she plans on combining her two areas of expertise. She has a creative drive and desire to make art an integral part of a child's learning experience. She has been described by her professors as a woman of notable integrity with a commitment to social justice, including a statement by one professor who said, 'with 10 plus years as an educator and relative to the more than 500 students I have seen pursuing a graduate degree, Ms. Williams is OUTSTANDING.