

# Avon Education Foundation initiates scholarship program

## Names three former Avon Elementary School students as recipients

By Brianna Townsend

AVON-BY-THE-SEA — Though the Avon-by-the-Sea Education Foundation [AEF] intended to give out just one, \$1,000 scholarship this year to a deserving college-bound Avon resident, AEF president Michele Gioia said the AEF had such a difficult time choosing between worthy applicants that three high school seniors were ultimately chosen to each receive a scholarship.

Andrew Sperduto, Tommy Rooney and Jack Cole, all of Avon but from three different high schools, were named the recipients of the AEF Graduating High School Senior Scholarship during the Avon Board of Education meeting last Wednesday.

They are the first Avon residents to receive AEF scholarships, a initiative started this year to recognize community service as well as academic and extracurricular participation.

Andrew, the son of Scott and Lori Sperduto of Woodland Avenue, is a Manasquan High School senior and recipient of the first place \$1,000 award.

Tommy, who received a \$500 award, is the son of Charles and Frances Rooney of Garfield Avenue and a track and field standout at Christian Brothers Academy.

Jack, a St. Rose High School senior and the son of Justine Lane of Sylvania Avenue, also received a \$500 award.

In addition to information about their high school performance, scholarship applicants were asked to explain how the experience of growing up in Avon has influenced their goals and plans for further study.

Andrew wrote about Avon Elementary School's math and science programs as a catalyst for developing the skills and confidence that eventually led to his decision to study engineering at the University of Michigan.



Avon Education Foundation [AEF] board member Peg Bonanno [left] and president Michele Gioia [right] helped to present St. Rose High School senior Jack Cole [from left], Manasquan High School senior Andrew Sperduto, Christian Brothers Academy senior Tommy Rooney, all of Avon, with AEF college scholarships last Wednesday at Avon Elementary School. *Photo courtesy AVON EDUCATION FOUNDATION*

“Without the strong traditions of Avon, such as the Science Fair and the great mix of Flex classes, choosing a field of study to pursue would not have come as easy,” he wrote.

Tommy also looked back to his experience at the Avon School in his essay — the fast friendships, healthy competitiveness, and emphasis on focus and hard work — as critical to his ability to successfully balance challenging academics and intense athletic training. He will study business at Columbia University next year.

Jack, who will pursue a degree in computer science at Marist College, cites his years in Avon, surrounded by hard-working, civic-minded family and neighbors, with inspiring his ambition to provide his own future family with the same strong sense of community.

He called Avon a town full of hard workers who have spent their lives working and earning their homes, the residents of which have “shown me what it means to be successful in life,” and in whose footsteps he wanted to follow.

The AEF [[avonbytheseafoundation.org](http://avonbytheseafoundation.org)] is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting educational and enrichment opportunities for residents of the community.

For information about becoming a member, contact Ms. Gioia at 914-572-6988.