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MAC STUDENTS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS NEW ZEALAND SCHOLARSHIPS

Three Te Kura o Tititea Mount Aspiring College 2023 senior students have been awarded prestigious New Zealand Scholarships in recognition of their outstanding academic performance.

Year 13 student Amy Benson and two former students Jackson Duguid and Nina Lee Smith (both Year 13 students in 2023) have been recognised as top secondary school scholars in English with Jackson also attaining an Outstanding Scholar Award for placing in the top 40 to 60 students in the country.

Each year, students can undertake New Zealand Scholarship assessments to be recognised as a top secondary school student in a particular subject.

To be awarded the New Zealand Scholarship, students are expected to show a deep understanding of the subject, demonstrate high-level critical thinking, and the ability to apply their understanding to complex situations.

MAC English teacher Fiona Gibson, who mentored the three students, said she was struck by the students' innate curiosity about the world around them.

"Amy, Nina and Jackson all have an amazing ability to see texts as social commentary and artistic constructions, combined with a driving intelligence and academic resilience.

"I learn so much from my students. Often, when reading students' work, I take a moment to smile and marvel at their wit and control over a line of argument.

"Jackson views all areas of the world as texts to analyse and can discuss the short stories of Katherine Mansfield, 'Lord of the Flies' and the postmodern film 'Barbie' with equal measures of academic vigour and wry humour.

"Nina's measured worldview made me pause and reflect, and Amy's wisdom knows no bounds and is voiced with quiet and irrefutable determination."

Scholarship winner Amy Benson said she enjoyed the opportunity to enhance her understanding of literature and improve her ability to respond to exam questions.

"I enjoyed being able to spend more time improving my essay writing abilities, exploring a wide range of texts, and considering the issues in these texts in response to the exam questions.

"Mrs Gibson's support enabled me to comprehend the content of the exam and she was always available to answer our questions and encourage our learning. We were also provided with many invaluable additional resources and exemplars."

Head of Learning Area for English Joanne Waide said undertaking the scholarship assessment could be beneficial for students.

"The English Scholarship programme offers students the opportunity to engage with critical texts and explore broader societal issues from a perspective similar to what they'll encounter at tertiary level. This is an empowering experience.

"In the MAC English Department, students can choose to sit scholarship across the five English classes, with two of those classes designed specifically as a pathway towards scholarship.

“In addition to three students who achieved scholarship, we also had a number of other students who came very close, so I applaud the efforts of all the students who undertook this academic challenge.”

Looking ahead, both Nina and Jackson are considering studying at American universities while Amy is continuing her Level 3 studies at MAC while also undertaking tertiary-level studies in maths, astronomy, and philosophy.

The scholarship examinations are run by the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. Students sit the exams in addition to their external examinations at the end of the year. Students who achieve New Zealand Scholarship can receive a monetary award ranging from a one-off \$500 payment for a single subject award to \$10,000 per year for up to three years for premier award winners.

More information: Please contact Principal Nicola Jacobsen on 03 443 0498 or principal@mtaspiring.school.nz