



STONINGTON
GARDEN CLUB

**NEWS RELEASE
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STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

Two Stonington High School Seniors Recognized for Interest in Environmental Sciences

STONINGTON, CONN. (August 15, 2022) – The Stonington Garden Club (SGC) announced today that it has awarded scholarships to two Stonington High School (SHS) seniors who will be pursuing studies in Environmental Sciences (ES) in college. The \$1,000 scholarships were presented to Brendan Coan and William Sawin in June 2022.

“An important component of the mission of the Stonington Garden Club is to educate and encourage interest in conservation and the environment. This is why we offer these awards to recognize and support our high school seniors interested in environmental sciences,” said Kirby Williams, SGC President.

“Today’s high school students approach life beyond graduation in such varied ways, and we are proud to offer awards that recognize these different paths,” said Michelle Kutz, Chair of the SGC Scholarship Committee.

The Club’s history with the ES department at Stonington High School has included providing funds for materials needed for their outdoor gardens, but the Club wanted to do more.

Determined to help and encourage local high schoolers, Kutz worked closely with SHS Science Teacher Elisa Whitman and the officers of the SGC to establish a scholarship award for a graduating senior in the spring of 2017. Now in its sixth year, SGC offers two awards, an Environmental Studies Award (\$1,000) and an Environmental Awareness Award (\$1,000).

Scholarship Recipients

Brendan Coan – Environmental Studies Award

Brendan has an impressive 4.43 GPA and intends to study environmental policy and activism at Northeastern University in Boston. Brendan’s interest in what impacts the environment reaches back to childhood visits to his father’s workplace, where they found themselves discussing topics such as “Why are microplastics an issue?” and “Why do companies such as Coca-Cola continue to use plastic bottles despite these troubles?” Brendan has a real passion for promoting sustainability in our community. He helped with a student government project last year to purchase rainwater barrels for the school and coordinated how the project fit the 4C’s curriculum at the school. Brendan hopes one day to bring the knowledge he gains from college back to Stonington to support best practices in environmentally friendly processes surrounding the local aquaculture and fishing industries. His father taught him the importance and need to protect our planet, and he plans to continue learning what more he can do.

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William Sawin – Environmental Awareness Award

William comes from a family deeply rooted in working toward earth sustainability. He will attend Middlebury College in Vermont, and as William notes, it is “home of the oldest undergraduate environmental studies program in the US.” William is planning his environmental studies with a focus on the area of social sciences. He is fortunate to enjoy the influence of his aunt, Beth Sawin, a climate scientist who works with a sustainability and solutions think tank at Multisolving Institute. He also benefits from his grandparents’ continued commitment to leaving a small footprint by living simply and sustainably off their land. This school year, William shadowed the land steward at Rhode Island’s Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This experience further deepened his foundation in the environmental sciences and secured his interest in support of ecological balance. In fact, William intends to participate in Middlebury’s Green Panthers athletic program and become a Green Liaison athlete, promoting sustainability wherever they go, with team, coach, and fan support. He hopes to bring back and implement a program like this at Stonington High School one day.

About the Stonington Garden Club

The Stonington Garden Club is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization whose mission is to educate and encourage interest in the environment and conservation, support community projects, and stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening. For almost 100 years, the club has had a lasting and positive impact on the community, and its members take great pride in the Stonington community and its environs. For more information or to inquire about membership, please visit www.stoningtongardenclub.org.

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Caption: Left to right: SGC Past President Deb Dodds, SHS Teacher Elise Whitman, Brendan Coan, and Michelle Kutz, SGC Scholarship Committee Chair



Caption: Left to right: SGC Past President Deb Dodds, William Sawin, Michelle Kutz, SGC Scholarship Committee Chair, and SHS Teacher Elise Whitman