



The High School View

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Seniors face FAFSA delays

BY NIKEYA TANKARD

As the frenzy of college admissions season winds to a close, many Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) seniors are now navigating the decision of where to go, and what they can afford to pay. This year, figuring out how to pay for college, and subsequently where to attend, may be more challenging, because of a processing delay of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used to determine students' eligibility for financial aid. The student aid index, or SAI (formally known as the estimated fam-

ily contribution, or EFC), outlines what parents and guardians are expected to pay for college based on their income and other factors. Families often find out their SAI in the fall, but this year many are still waiting on their results in March, due to the fact that the FAFSA was redesigned and only released in December 2023, nearly two months after the expected release date. As a result, families are unable to share their SAI with colleges and universities, so colleges have no way to calculate financial aid packages that would help students and families determine if they can attend a given school.

MVRHS scholarship program coordinator Mary Korba explained that the FAFSA delay has slowed down the scholarship process overall. "It's kind of been a waiting game for schools and colleges," Ms. Korba said. "Part of both the college and scholarship application process is submitting proof that students need aid ... but you can't take a number that isn't there," she said. The Martha's Vineyard community is notable for the generous amount of money (over \$1.2 million last year) it awards high school graduates each year on Class Night, which is held the Friday

before graduation. While students have traditionally made the decision about where to attend prior to the announcement of local scholarships, the FAFSA delay has indirectly impacted the selection process for some local scholarship organizations. Jennifer Ray, MV Bank's community engagement director, spoke to the uncertainty she's observed in applications for scholarships provided by the MV Bank Charitable Foundation. "Despite the fact that the foundation considers financial need as only one factor of many, we had a number of students who started their applications but ended up not finishing, or discarding their applications. I think a lot of students are just uncertain about how much they can

do without their financial aid information," she said. Guidance director John Fiorito said, "The money awarded on Class Night [through the local scholarship programs] can help families substantially, but we do stress every year that it should not be relied upon as a determining factor when students are deciding whether or not they can afford to go to a particular college." The MV Youth Scholarship, one of the Island's largest, awards scholarships based on merit, academics, and financial need. It aims to cover all remaining college costs following federal grant and college financial aid packages. MV Youth executive director Lindsey Scott said, "We use merit as the criteria to narrow our applicants

down from 60. When we get down to about 12 applicants, we do consider financial need." She added, "Hopefully, families will have their FAFSA in the next month — if we're waiting on the schools and the schools are waiting on FAFSA, we might be at a standstill." While students are typically asked to decide on a college via a deposit by May 1, most colleges and universities have extended the deadline this year to May 15, or June 1. Senior Caroline Dolby has been accepted to Fairfield University, her school of choice, but finds herself still weathering the stress of applying to college. "I can't make my college decision final until I have all the financial information I need," she said. **HSV**

Artists display creativity through Scholastic competition

BY OLIVIA MACPHERSON, LULU WHITE, AND PENNY HADDAD

The Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Visual Arts program offers an outlet for many students to express themselves and their creativity throughout the year. One such opportunity is participating in the annual Scholastic Art and Writing Contest, where this year, 16 MVRHS students won a total of 22 awards. The Scholastic Awards are presented and funded by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, a nonprofit whose goal is providing exhibition opportunities for young artists, along with scholarships and recognition. The Scholastic Awards were founded in 1923 by Maurice R. Robinson, and have had many notable alumni, including writer Sylvia Plath, artist Andy Warhol, and, recently, National Youth Poet Laureate

Amanda Gorman. Of the 16 winners at MVRHS, three students won the top prize, or Gold Key: freshman Odin Robinson (architecture and industrial design), sophomore Hunter Broderick (ceramics and glass), and junior Finn MacLeod (photography). Their work appeared in a statewide art show in mid-March at Tufts University, and will go to the national competition being held in New York City later this spring. Although the Scholastic Awards are competitive, there is no limit to the number of entries a student can submit. The MVRHS art program is able to cover submission fees for some students each year, which encourages participation from a wide range of the student body. Senior Sam Warren was awarded a second-place Silver Key for her six-piece photography portfolio "Asphyxiation," which features stark



Sophomore and Silver Key winner Claus Smith puts the finishing touches on a mug.

BRADY VOUGHT

silhouettes of a human face in varying degrees of disguise and distress. "My goal was to make someone feel something — not necessarily a good feeling, just to feel something," said Sam. "I wasn't necessarily nervous [about submitting to Scholastic], because I

knew that I liked my art." Photography teacher and art, design, and technology department chair Christopher Baer notes that not all students apply to the Scholastic Awards. "That's always a bummer, when you have some really good students with some really good work,

[and] they will choose not to enter because it's just not their thing," he said. Due to this hesitancy, some teachers choose to make Scholastic submission a requirement rather than an option. This motivated senior Tatum Thomas, who said, "I didn't originally make anything to submit to Scholastic. It was an assignment, so I figured I might as well submit." Her painting of the words "Boogie Down" and some cardboard stars didn't ultimately win. Sophomore Hunter Broderick's Gold Key-winning submission was a ceramic and glass sculpture. The sculpture, titled "Humanish," featured a silver stack of humanlike faces that seem to be frowning, yawning, and smiling atop one another. Hunter explained that the creative process presented some challenges. "I had another face on the bottom [of the sculpture] that exploded when we were

firing [in the kiln], so that caused a few issues. Then the first glaze I put on there didn't stay," he said. Even though students are encouraged to prioritize the process of creation over the outcome of the contest, winning a Scholastic Award does carry an impact. Mr. Baer said, "When somebody does win, it can change the trajectory of what they want to study, or where they want to go. I've had students who won who then, because of that, go on to a career in art. All of this just because they won some award when they were freshman or a sophomore." Sam reiterated the idea that being an artist is really about being in touch with your creativity, not about accolades. "People should be proud of their work regardless of if it wins a Gold Key, Silver Key, or honorable mention," she said. "Your work is your work. Not everybody's going to like it, but that's OK." **HSV**

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