

Seven Saugus students receive Unsung Hero Award

SAUGUS – Seven Saugus Public Schools students received the Unsung Hero Award from the Saugus Business Education Collaborative (SBEC) in a ceremony May 22 at Saugus Middle High School sponsored by WIN Waste Innovations.

The 2024 Unsung Hero Award recipients are: Saugus High School – Jordan Chantha and Kathryn De Souza; Saugus Middle School – Luis Fung Chen and Victoria Vannah; Belmonte STEAM Academy – Reese DelMuto; Veterans Early Learning Center – Pedro Amarilla and Gwen Thurston.

The Unsung Hero Award is based on a variety of factors including academic effort, character, maturity, personality, standing among peers and staff, school citizenship, and contributions to the entire school community.

Veterans teacher Christina Nicolo said Thurston “has a light in her eyes when she talks about those she loves.” In presenting the award to Amarilla, teacher Jessica Esposito said she was “blown away by how such a young boy can carry himself with such poise and integrity. He comes in ready and eager to learn every day.”

Belmonte teacher Marissa Concannon said DelMuto “demonstrates courage and perseverance in difficult situations, and she is compassionate and selfless.”

Middle High School Principal Brendon Sullivan noted Luis Fung Chen’s contributions to the Drama Club and his fluency in Spanish. Vannah was a Project 351 ambassador and organized a clothing drive for Cradles to Crayons.

Saugus High honoree Jordan Chantha, who is headed to Suffolk University to study pre-law and international relations, is “a scholar and social justice activist,” Sullivan said. “His contributions to the school have helped make it a safer, more inclusive place.”

De Souza is ranked third in her class and is headed to UMass Lowell to study software engineering and computer science. She works with the Drama Club as a stage manager and also helps with the Middle School Drama Club.

“We are proud to honor these exceptional students for the positive role they play in their schools,” said Elliott Casey, manager at WIN Waste Innovations in Saugus. “They are a credit to their school, their family and their community.”

The students received a star-shaped trophy and citations from the Mass. House of Representatives from Rep. Donald Wong, Mass State Senate from Sen. Brendan Crighton and Saugus Board of Selectmen from Chairman Debra Panetta.