

## **‘The future starts now’: Mohawk Trail Regional School bids farewell to 26 graduating seniors**

By DIANE BRONCACCIO, For the Recorder, Published: 6/4/2023 4:16:49 PM

BUCKLAND — Mohawk Trail Regional School Principal Chris Buckland delivered pithy but sensible advice to the 26 graduating seniors and their loved ones who packed the auditorium on Saturday.

“Replace the word ‘but’ with ‘and,’” Buckland said. “See which doors and opportunities open up to you when you do. Be consistent in your goals. Learn patience. You must start at zero, not 100. Birds fly from the ground, not from the top.”

He added, “You’re at the start of a fantastic journey. Make sure you are good to people as you climb up. Invariably, you may have to pass some of them again if you temporarily have to go back down.”

Valedictorian Paige King recounted many school experiences that led the students to their graduation day.

“Now, there’s only mere minutes until [we receive] our diplomas and move on to the next phase of our lives. Surprisingly, the day we’ve been waiting for so long is actually pretty terrifying,” she said. “Right now is a moment of immense change; a time for a completely fresh start.”

King told her classmates not to be afraid of a challenge, “because a challenge is what enables you to grow.”

“This is the time to discover who you really are, what your passions are, [what] your goals are and express yourself. The future starts now, so make it what you want it to be,” she urged. “As Heath Ledger once said, if you make decisions based on other people’s reactions or judgments, then you make really boring choices.”

Salutatorian Emery King, an Equity Endorsement recipient, also took time to acknowledge students nationwide “who will never graduate” because they were killed in school shootings. He also spoke of minority students and transgender students around the country as being “disproportionately bullied, harassed and discriminated against.”

“While I apologize for bringing up such a subject,” Emery King said, “this is the reality that is lived by many. However, it is something that, as a larger community, we can slowly change. ... We can only create change by being proactive.”

## Graduates

Yassen Abdelgawad, Deven Buchanan, Porter Carr, Courtney Celli, Anthony Collier, Charlotte Curtis, Oliver Flynn, Jessica Gokey, Ariana Gougeon, Myah Grant, Rylee Hager, Aeva Hazlett, Seth Healy, Gracie Hicks, Landon Isabella, Shyann Jones, Emery King, Paige King, Owen Lake, Aileen Moffatt, Makayla Noyes, Hannah Plesnar, Christopher Royter, Savannah Simmons, Percy Snow and Clare Wasileski.

## Scholarships

Deven Buchanan: Bunker Martin Award, Outstanding Male Award; Courtney Celli: Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, Charles E. White, Mohawk District Education Association Scholarship, Cowell Fund Award, Gertrude Steeter Award, Gordy Van Guilder Family Scholarship, Arms Academy Fund Trust, Shelburne Falls Eagles Scholarship; Myah Grant: Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, Phillip C. Toy, Arms Academy Fund Trust; Rylee Hager: Trustees of Arms Academy, Charles E. White, Cowell Fund Award, Mohawk District Education Association Scholarship, Mohawk Trail Music Association, Ruth and Alfred Carpenter, Sr. Memorial Scholarship; Aeva Hazlett: Louise Vetterling Ellis From the Heart Award; Seth Healy: John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, Retired Educators Association of Massachusetts (REAM), Franklin County Chapter Scholarship, Bobby Wells Award, Mohawk Trail Music Association; Gracie Hicks: John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, Edgar Walter Martin II Memorial Scholarship, Fred Wells Scholarship, Ian Fletcher-Lynch Spirit of the River Scholarship, Mohawk District Education Association Scholarship, Kiwanis Rolland Gifford Memorial Scholarship, Raymond and Agnes Starkey Endowed Memorial Scholarship, Sarah Kemble Scholarship Award, Shelburne Falls Women's Club, Arms Academy Fund Trust, Shelburne Falls Eagles Auxiliary Scholarship, Shelburne Falls Eagles Scholarship; Landon Isabella: Mohawk Trail Music Association; Emery King: John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Trustees of Arms Academy, Barbara and Herbert Purington Scholarship, Carl H. Nilman, Charlemont Alumni Scholarship, Doug Turner Memorial Scholarship, Edgar Walter Martin II Memorial Scholarship, Franklin County Bar Association Thomas W. Merrigan Memorial Scholarship, Friends of Robert Strong Woodward, Heath Ladies Aid, Kiwanis Stan Smithers Scholarship, MTAA Samuel Howell Sylvester, Mohawk Trail Music Association, Shelburne Falls Military Band Scholarship, Shelburne Falls Women's Club, Arms Academy Fund Trust, Shelburne Falls Eagles Scholarship; Paige King: John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, Charlemont Alumni Scholarship, The "Coach" Bob & Pat Hinds Scholarship Award, Doug Turner Memorial Scholarship, Edgar Walter Martin II Memorial Scholarship, Heath Ladies Aid, Kiwanis Philip Joyce Memorial, MT Athletic Association Award, Lisa Burdick Memorial Award, Outstanding Female Award, Summer R. Steele Memorial Scholarship, Shelburne Falls Women's Club, Gordy Van Guilder Family Scholarship, Arms Academy Fund Trust; Aileen Moffatt: Trustees of Arms Academy, William C. Pollard, Melah Murray Award, Arms Academy Fund Trust; Hannah Plesnar: Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, Doug Turner Memorial Scholarship, Earl L. Valiton Memorial, John B. Temple Memorial Scholarship, Fred Wells Scholarship, Kelly M. Broughan Memorial, Shelburne Falls Women's Club, Women of the Moose Chapter 316 Medical Field Scholarship, William C. Pollard, Arms Academy Fund Trust, Shelburne Falls Eagles Auxiliary Scholarship;

Savannah Simmons: John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Trustees of Arms Academy, Carl H. Nilman, The "Coach" Bob & Pat Hinds Scholarship Award, Edgar Walter Martin II Memorial Scholarship, Heath Ladies Aid, Kiwanis Allan Willis Memorial Scholarship, Larry Rancourt Scholarship, MTAA Terri Scott Ferraguto, Outstanding Female Award, Shelburne Falls Women's Club, Gordy Van Guilder Family Scholarship, Arms Academy Fund Trust; Clare Wasileski: John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Trustees of Arms Academy, Colrain Community Church, Francis R. Crosier Memorial Scholarship, Helen E. Long Memorial, Sue Atherton Endowed Scholarship Fund for Agriculture and Farming, Szawlowski Farms Agricultural Foundation Scholarship, Hillside Agricultural Society, Class of 1959, Mohawk District Education Association Warren Davenport Memorial Scholarship, Mohawk District Education Association/Mohawk Building Scholarship.

*Source: <https://www.recorder.com/-The-future-starts-now--Mohawk-Trail-Regional-School-bids-farewell-to-26-graduating-seniors-51165770>*