



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Bonita High School Senior Receives \$200,000 NROTC Scholarship

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – As an elementary school student during the pandemic, Bonita High School senior James Hurwitz would often spend time between online classes viewing short history-related videos on the internet. The more he watched, the more fascinated he became with world history, dreaming of becoming a standout student with solid character and a future leader.

Devoting himself to academics and leadership in high school, Hurwitz is on track to graduate with a 4.0 GPA, while building his skills through participation in the Civil Air Patrol as part of its Brackett Composite Squadron 64, and training with the Marine Delayed Entry program, where he impressed recruiters with his academic and physical capabilities, knowledge of history and enthusiasm in engaging with instructors and cadets.

Hurwitz received the surprise of his life when Capt. Joseph Lechnar from the Riverside Recruitment Office, supported by a group of Marines in full dress uniforms, came to his classroom to present him with a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) scholarship worth \$200,000 in April. The scholarship will provide Hurwitz with money for tuition, fees, and books, as well as provide him with a monthly stipend. Hurwitz will attend either the University of Notre Dame, UCLA or William & Mary College.

“I was very surprised. I didn’t see it coming,” Hurwitz said. “I have been dreaming of this for a very long time. This program has really helped me to reach my goals, both in my physical training and in developing my mental mindset. My recruiters won me over with the Marine lifestyle. I haven’t made up my mind on a major, but I love architecture, and I am considering that.”

Joining Hurwitz for the surprise were his mother, sister, and grandparents. The family received word that Hurwitz had won the scholarship more than a week before the announcement, and had a difficult time keeping the presentation a surprise, according to Hurwitz’s mother, Kelly Kennedy.

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“This scholarship means everything to James, and we were certain he was going to get it, but the waiting was tough for him. All week he’s been saying ‘I’m not going to get it,’ but we already knew he had been chosen for the award,” Kennedy said. “James has always been a fan of history. One year in elementary school he dressed up as Gen. Ulysses S. Grant for Halloween. We are so proud of him.”

Hurwitz’s embrace of world history was a contributing factor in his recruitment, according to Capt. Lechnar, along with strong test scores and leadership potential. Speaking to Hurwitz’s class during the announcement, Lechnar touched on the intangible qualities the Marines look for when identifying future leaders, including academic prowess, athletic abilities, and leadership potential.

“James is a very impressive recruit, with a brilliant mind, and a firm grip on world history,” Lechnar said. “This NROTC scholarship is a very competitive scholarship. We had nearly 300 applicants in our western recruitment area. Less than 30% were awarded the scholarship. James has a great future ahead of him.”

Hurwitz credits his involvement with the Civil Air Patrol for paving the way to an NROTC scholarship.

“The Civil Air Patrol is where I began to learn discipline and leadership,” Hurwitz said. “It has helped me the most in achieving my goals and building my character. I believe everyone should join the Civil Air Patrol. It is helping to shape the next generation of leaders.”

The NROTC scholarship is administered through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Scholarships Board. The scholarship comes with a service obligation minimum of four years active service as a Marine, or five years for the Navy.

“James Hurwitz is an amazing and gifted student and a great person to be around, a true Bearcat,” Bonita High Principal Kenny Ritchie said. “James has really put in the work over the years, and we are so proud to see him fulfill his dreams by attending college and joining the Marines. We know he will serve with pride and integrity. Congratulations to James and his family.”

PHOTO:

BUSD_NROTC: Bonita High School senior James Hurwitz is surprised on campus by a group of U.S. Marines, who presented him with a \$200,000 Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) scholarship.

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