

Suburban Life Scholars

Downers Grove South

Lydia Walsh-Rock



Notable Student Academic Achievements: National Merit Commended Student (12th Grade); National Council of Teachers of English Certificate for Superior Performance in Writing (11th grade); Gold Math Award (11th grade); Membership in American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese Spanish Honors Society (11th grade). High scores on AP Tests: 4's on Language & Composition and Microeconomics; 5's on US History, BC Calculus, Spanish Language, and Psychology. Scored a 34 on her ACT. Student's GPA is 5.

Student Involvement in Activities: Curricular Choirs grades 9-12: Freshman Choir President (9th grade), Section Leader (9-12th grade), A Cappella Choir President (12th Grade), IMEA District Musician (10th-12th grade), IMEA All-State Honors Chorus (12th Grade), District Vocal Honors Recital (10th and 11th grade); Madrigals Singers grades 11-12: Section leader both years; Speech Team grades 9-12: 6th Place in state Performance in the Round (11th grade). Degree of Special Distinction in the National Forensic League (11th Grade); Mad Dash/RUSH Corps freshman orientation leader grades 10-12: Small Group Leader (11th grade), RUSH Corps Captain (11th and 12th grade); Snowball/Snowflake grades 9-11: Snowflake leader (10th grade), Snowball Small Group Leader (11th grade); Theater grades 9-12: Freshman Play Student Director (10th-12th grade), Six Star Honor Thespian in the International Thespian Society, Masque and Gavel (Drama Club) Vice President (12th grade). Costume and Makeup Crew (9-12 grades); Student Activities and Athletics Leadership Team (11-12th grades); National Honor Society (11-12th grades); Freshman Softball (9th grade); Orchestra Section Leader (9th grade).

Student Involvement in Community Service: The Night Ministry grades 9-12: A service organization that makes sandwiches and other dinner items and serves meals in underprivileged areas of the city of Chicago a few times a month; Summer Camp Counselor grades 9-12: Camp counselor for "Godstock", a week-long religiously affiliated camp every summer; Bell Choir grades 9-12: Church hand bell choir that meets every week throughout the school year and performs during services; Employed at Nonnie's Pizza as well as babysitting for several families.

Nominated by Amy Klug, School Counselor: It is my great pleasure to nominate Lydia Walsh-Rock for the Suburban Life Scholar recognition! Lydia is a truly extraordinary young lady. As her school counselor, I have learned that Lydia is highly intelligent and has a vested interest in improving her school and community. She is thoroughly involved in extra-curricular activities while maintaining top-notch grades. Lydia is one of the very best students in her class academically and socially. She is well-rounded, independent, and driven. She holds herself to a very high standard and does whatever she can to reach excellence at every turn. She is one of the brightest students I have worked with in my 12 years at DGS, and I am further impressed by her contributions to our theater, music, and leadership programs as well as her community service activities. Lydia is an incredibly unique student who is well-deserving of any scholarship or recognition she receives!

Lydia's teachers have praised her on her outstanding leadership, class participation, and thirst for education. Her teachers have told me that her writing is impeccable, and she engages in highly intellectual discussions in the classroom. Teachers consider themselves lucky to have Lydia in class because she raises the bar for other students. She models good discussion and debate skills while maintaining the respect of her teachers and peers. Lydia has always approached her course work with maturity and foresight. I have often wondered how Lydia has enough time in the day to

do as much as she does. She carries a full course load and she manages her time and personal needs beautifully. I knew that Lydia was unique when, in her freshman year, she wanted to take 8 classes and not have a lunch period, especially since 3 of those classes were honors, which was the most that she could take as a freshman. Although I think that schedule was difficult, Lydia still managed to achieve success in every class and has always maintained straight A's while taking the most difficult classes possible. If we offered AP Gym Class, she would probably take that too! She has a very well-rounded interest in her classes and sees the benefits in all of them. She has told me how much she loves math and science, and how those subjects appeal to her logical side. At the same time, she'll talk about how much she loves English and music because they give her an opportunity to tap into her creative and expressive side. Lydia thrives off of learning new things, regardless of the subject area. She has always known that she would like to go to a highly respected university and she knew how much hard work and determination it would take to get there. She is a brilliant and gifted student who belongs at the best universities.

I have personally gotten to know Lydia, not only as her counselor, but also as the advisor for Mad Dash and RUSH Corps, which are our freshmen orientation programs. Lydia was a very important leader and role model for both events. I always know that I can count on Lydia to step-up and take a leadership role. She has contributed greatly to the skits that are performed at the Mad Dash, and she is a friendly face for the freshmen to look up to. When I send her into classrooms full of freshmen to teach them about life at DGS, I know that I can fully trust that she is guiding them in the right direction. Her motivation, organizational skills, and positive personality are huge assets while we organize these events for over 500 freshmen. I know that Lydia is a positive role model in other areas as well. Her choir teacher told me that Lydia is "one of our finest leaders in the music performance program of over 650 students." Not only is Lydia a high achieving student academically, but she is also thoroughly involved in the life of DGS. She shows others that it is possible to strike a healthy balance with academics and fun extra-curricular activities, and be successful in all of it.

I am recommending Lydia for the Suburban Life Scholar recognition because I cannot think of another student who better embodies what we hope for in all of our students. She values her education and has made our school a better place through her leadership and commitment to excellence. She wholeheartedly contributes to her community, and is part of the reason that Downers Grove is a great place to live and learn. This is just the beginning for Lydia, and I cannot wait to see all the amazing things she accomplishes in her future! She is the epitome of a Suburban Scholar!

Downers Grove North

Bianca Spalla



Notable Student Academic Achievements: 4.0 and above Honor Roll, National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, Prudential Spirit of Community Bronze Medal Winner, State of Illinois Senate Recognition Award of the 99th General Assembly, State of Illinois House of Representatives Recognition Award of the 98th General Assembly Student's GPA is 4.57.

Student Involvement in Activities: Band/Marching Band (Highlights include playing Carnegie Hall and Disney's Thanksgiving Day Parade), Spanish Club (Officer), P.E. Leader, Student Council.

Student Involvement in Community Service: Bianca's Backpacks (Raised money to purchase backpacks and school supplies for underprivileged kids – Raised enough money to purchase 1,000 backpacks); Project Playground (Raised funds to purchase a playground for 2 elementary schools); COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS: President Barack Obama Recognition Letter for Project Playground (2016), The President of The United States Volunteer Service Award (2015), The President of The United States Volunteer Service Award (2014), Recognition by Board of Education School District 45 (2014, 2015, 2016), Recognition by Superintendent Anthony Palmisano for Project Playground Completion with Installation of two playgrounds (2016).

Nominated by Cyndi Karmik, School Counselor: When I think of Bianca, my head fills with so many descriptors. A hard-working, dedicated, and enthusiastic young lady to both her academics, school, and community. She constantly gives 110% of herself, which has been demonstrated academically through her challenging course selections and grades. Service oriented, thoughtful, initiator, and selfless, as she is a young lady who gives back to those who are in need. Musical. Bianca loves to play the clarinet. More importantly, she loves the gift that music is to other people and that nothing can be compared to the feeling of being the person to lift someone's mood. Bianca's own words capture it best, "My dedication to students and my community is at the core of who I am." I have confidence that Bianca's dynamic and generous spirit will be an integral part of her college and adult life. It will be exciting to see what great things will come next not only for Bianca, but for others!