

American Association of University Women
Huntingdon Branch

For Release Right away

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April Awards meeting AAUW meeting

Photo : Left to right: Olivia Barney, Karli Smith, Rachael Denae Barszczowski, and Deb Grove (AAUW member). Leah Lashlee was unable to attend because she was participating in the high school musical.

The April 27th awards event of the Huntingdon Branch of the Association of American University Women (AAUW) honored senior girls from each of the county's high schools. The awardees were invited to a dessert reception as guests of honor along with their mothers. The speaker for the meeting was

The four high school seniors who received awards exemplify the standards of AAUW because they plan to continue their education at a college or university. They have also been good citizens and assets to their school and community. The honored seniors were Olivia R. Barney of Southern Huntingdon County High School, Rachael Denae Barszczowski of Juniata Valley High School, Leah Lashlee of the Huntingdon Area High School, and Karli Smith Mount Union Area High School.

Olivia Barney, the Southern Huntingdon High School representative, is the daughter of Donna Barney and lives in Orbisonia. Olivia has been a member of several clubs and societies: Spanish Club (vice-president senior year), Library Club, Daily News Press Club, Varsity Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Drama Club (participation in 4 school productions), Photography Club, Majorettes, Leo's Club, Courtyard Project, running club, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), National Honor Society and Student Council President. (senior year). She also served as the Class of 2017 vice-president, FBLA vice-president, Field Hockey treasurer, and Leo's Club president during her high school years.

She has been active in sports and recently signed a letter of intent to participate in Lafayette College's track and field team. She throws the discus and shot in Track and Field and has been a member since the 9th grade. She has also been a member of the Field Hockey team since the 9th grade, serving as captain in her junior and senior years.

She received several awards and honors including ranked second in the Class of 2017. She was selected for District Youth Leadership Conference, selected for the FBLA State Leadership Conference, nominated for the National Young Leaders Conference in DC, Student of the Month award every year

starting in middle school, over 25 published articles in the Daily News, Snowball Queen of 2017 and a Maquire Foundation Award in the Pennsylvania Society Scholarship Program.

Olivia is active in the community by participating in the Living Water Christian Outreach Youth Group, the Southern Huntingdon Relay for Life, Junior Councilperson for the Orbisonia Borough and the Red Cross Blood Drive. She also volunteered for the Day of Caring, at the Woodland Retirement Home, Christmas in Our Hometown, Family Fun Day and reconstruction of an abandoned courtyard on school grounds. She also holds jobs at Subway and State Farm Insurance Agency.

She will be attending Lafayette College in the fall as a member of the Track and Field Team. She will also pursue degrees in government law and Spanish. She plans to go on to graduate school as well.

Juniata Valley High School was represented by Rachael Denae Barszczowski. She is the daughter of the late Gregg Barszczowski and DeLene Foster and resides in Alexandria. Denae has been active in the Hoofprinter's 4-H Horse Club since 2008 and has served as News Reporter, Treasurer, Vice-President and President. She was also elected to the 4-H County Council. Her school activities include Competitive Reading Team in Junior High, Jr/Sr High Chorus, Vice-President in Student Government, National Honor Society, FBLA, Yearbook Club, Press Club and Student Council. She has also been a staff reporter submitting school news articles to The Daily News.

Awards include MERF Radio Student of the month (4 years), 4-H Teen Leader and Outstanding Junior Girl and Senior Girl, United States Achievement Academy National Award, Outstanding Art Achievement, The American Legion Distinguished Achievement Award, and Veterans of Foreign Wars Outstanding Spokeperson. She also has volunteered at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds Ground Maintenance and 4-H Food Booth, the Huntingdon Horseman Inc. Grounds Maintenance as well as food preparation and ribbon distribution, Huntingdon County Soup Kitchen, Benchmark Therapy and Wellness Center, Day of Caring, VA Memorial Hospital Christmas Decoration, and JC Blair Memorial Hospital visitor and patient escort and assistant.

She is active in her church, First Presbyterian, in housekeeping. She also has worked at the Spruce Creek Tavern since 2015 in various positions.

Denae has been accepted at Seton Hill University. Her coursework will prepare her for a position as a Physician's Assistant.

The Huntingdon Area senior Leah Lashlee is the daughter of Ethan and Jeannie Lashee of Huntingdon. Leah has been active in several sports including Varsity Swimming 10th through 12th grades, Varsity Soccer 9th through the 11th and lettering, and Varsity Tennis in the 12th grade and lettering. She has been in two musicals: "Sound of Music" as a junior and "Into the Woods" as a senior as Sleeping Beauty.

Leah has also been involved in activities outside of the school including the Rotary Interact Club in which she served as treasurer in 2015-2016 and president in 2016 and 2017. As a recipient of the Rotary Youth Leadership Award, she participated in an event at Juniata college that taught leadership and communication skills.

She has been in Girl Scouts for 10 years from Brownie to Ambassador and is active in the youth group at the Stone Church of the Brethren.

She has been accepted to the California University of Pennsylvania and will be studying Social Work. She has plans also to get a Master's in Social Work and eventually wants to work with people with disabilities.

The final awardee was Karli Smith from Mount Union High School Her parents are Dave and Andrea Smith of Mount Union. She has been active in Track and Field for four years as a competitor in the javelin throw. She also lettered for this event. She has been a cheerleader since she was 5 years old. She was co-captain during senior year and lettered as well. She has served as Vice-President of the National Honor Society chapter. She has also been a member of Student Council and Kindness 360+ which is a group that does random acts of kindness any day of the year.

She enjoys hanging out with friends and family. She will attend Juniata College in the fall and major in Natural and Social Sciences. Her plans are to become a Physician's Assistant.

Rose Amrhein, President of the Juniata College AAUW student group, spoke to the girls on the topic, "Succeeding in College". She emphasized four major points that had been important to her in her college experience. The first was to accept change that included finding new friends and trying some new experiences. She noted that your dreams can change. Second was that you find out more about who you are. Be sure that you are not discriminated against and that you are respected. A third point was to be sure and seize any opportunity. Join clubs: you may meet your closest friend. She marched in DC and did research on coyotes, things that could be out of one's "Comfort Zone". And last don't take yourself too seriously. Stress has effects so manage it. Move on. In the end, trust yourself because you know yourself best.

Branch Member Amy Frazier-Yoder prepared a trivia game for the group. Teams were formed and had to answer questions about AAUW and various accomplishments by women over the last two centuries. Dessert was served and the attendees enjoyed a social time.

AAUW is committed in advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in

this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin and disability. Call Pat Croissant for further details on membership, 643-0606.