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## News Release

### **CollegeReady Helps Underserved First-Generation Green Bay Students Pursue a College Degree**

GREEN BAY (May 23, 2023) – CollegeReady, a nonprofit organization that helps local students pay for college and prepares them for success, is congratulating their 166 NEW Scholars college readiness program participants and sending the Class of 2023 participants off to college.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> at UW-Green Bay’s Weidner Center for the Performing Arts, CollegeReady gathered its NEW Scholars college readiness program participants for *NEW Scholars Take Center Stage!*, a year-end celebration of local, first-generation students. In partnership with UW-Green Bay, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, and the Green Bay Area Public School District, this event especially highlighted the Class of 2023 NEW Scholars as they signed a letter of intent to study at their chosen college/university this fall.

“We are incredibly proud of all our program participants,” shared CollegeReady Executive Director Brent Roubal. “Our students have been working hard to accomplish their goal of pursuing a college education, and it’s an honor to recognize them for their achievements.”

Data shows that only 26% of economically disadvantaged local students will pursue post-secondary education. By contrast, 100% of graduating NEW Scholars will attend college after this school year.

"The NEW Scholar graduates have demonstrated incredible perseverance during their high school career," stated Green Bay Area Public School District Interim Deputy Superintendent Judy Wiegand. "We are grateful to CollegeReady and their NEW Scholars program for breaking down the barriers that exist between our students and their ability to accomplish their goals of higher education. On behalf of the Green Bay Area Public School District, I extend our best wishes to the Class of 2023 and may they achieve great success in the future."

Available to students within the Green Bay Area Public School district, the NEW Scholars program was established to help underserved youth become the first person in their family to graduate from college.

“We are excited to accept students from the NEW Scholars program into the Phoenix family, joining the more than 50,000 Phoenix graduates who continue to transform our communities,” said UW-Green Bay Chancellor Michael Alexander. “Providing access to higher education for everyone who

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wants to learn is core to our mission. We are proud to be a First Gen Forward institution, and welcome everyone who wants to continue to rise and work to achieve their goals.”

Knowing how to access and prepare for college is crucial for first-generation students, so after-school programs like NEW Scholars make an enormous positive difference. “NEW Scholars taught me how to move forward toward college, and understand my next steps,” shared Brandon Rivéra De Leon, a Class of 2023 graduate and featured student speaker at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> event. “That really helped me a lot.”

Dr. Jennifer Flatt, NWTC vice president of Student Services, emphasized the importance of providing first-generation students with the necessary resources so they develop the self-assurance needed to pursue their goals. “Organizations such as CollegeReady play a fundamental role in this process. As a longstanding partner with CollegeReady, NWTC is committed to making higher education accessible to all learners and prioritizing our need to be ready to support first-generation students,” said Flatt.

After bouncing back from the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the Class of 2023 during their first year of high school, these students have been diligently pursuing their goal of becoming the first in their family to earn a college degree. They have been accepted at UW-Green Bay, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, St. Norbert College, UW-Madison and UW-Oshkosh.

“Our 2023 graduates have really set themselves up for success in college next year,” says Roubal. “All of our graduating NEW Scholars will receive at least one college scholarship, and many will receive additional financial aid, which significantly lightens the financial burden on our students and their parents.”

Through academic support, college prep, parent workshops, service learning, and so much more, NEW Scholars breaks down barriers to higher education that exist for many low-income and first-generation students. In addition, participants earn up to a \$5,000 scholarship toward their college expenses.

### **About CollegeReady**

Since 1962, CollegeReady (previously Scholarships, Inc.) has been the local “go-to” resource for Northeast Wisconsin students who need help funding their college dreams. The organization has awarded nearly \$13M in scholarships to thousands of local students, and provides support and encouragement to underserved, college-bound middle and high school students in our community through the NEW Scholars college readiness program.

For more information about CollegeReady and the NEW Scholars program, follow us on social media @CollegeReadyWI or visit [CollegeReadyWI.org](https://CollegeReadyWI.org)