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TUESDAY'S TEEN

CHHS, Gatton graduate receives national recognition in essay contest

By AMY SMITH THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE
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CHHS and Gatton Academy graduate Jonathon Reilly has received Bronze Distinction in the 2023 National Russian Essay Contest.

Submitted

Getting to know Jonathon Reilly

Birth: He was born in New Jersey and moved to Kentucky when he was 1 year old.

Family: He has one brother and one sister.

Favorite food: Very spicy food, typically Indian or Thai

Least favorite food: Beans

Favorite restaurant: India Oven

Favorite movie: "Interstellar"

Favorite cartoon character: Finn the Human

Central Hardin High School and Gatton Academy graduate Jonathon Reilly received Bronze Distinction in the 2023 National Russian Essay Contest through the American Council of Teachers of Russian.

While he can't pinpoint the reason why, Reilly says he has always been drawn to the language.

"My favorite part about Russian is definitely being able to read the Cyrillic alphabet and, by extension, some of the Greek alphabet because even if I can't understand other languages that use the alphabet, I can still read the words and make some inferences," he said.

The greatest challenge to learning the Russian language is the use of gender specific words, Reilly said.

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"In Russian, each tense and case interact with the gender of nouns, adjectives and some verbs in different ways," Reilly said. "This means that when you learn a new concept in Russian, you have to learn about five or six different versions of it to cover every gender and case."

Reilly was one of 16 recipients of the 2022 Gatton Research Internship Grant, a competitive scholarship that allows students to pursue research during the summer of their junior year in high school.

According to Cheryl Kirby-Stokes, his academic opportunities advisor at Gatton Academy, Reilly worked with Western Kentucky University's Associate Professor in Computer Science Dr. Jeffrey Galloway on developing a virtual reality program that would provide a virtual tour of campus.

"Everything I heard from the professors who worked with him was incredibly positive," Kirby-Stokes said. "All complemented his terrific work ethic and his creativity. Most of all, they were impressed by his ability to pick up never-before-used skills and run with it."

Although many new concepts were thrown at him, Reilly never missed a beat, Kirby-Stokes said.

"He had to learn new programs and software from day one, but never did that slow him down," she said. "It was a pleasure working with him, and I have no doubt he will be successful no matter what his career path."

While at Gatton, Reilly was a part of the political debate club and led Gatton's outdoor activity club. He also volunteered as a peer-tutor teaching computer science to students who had fallen behind.

During his last semester at Gatton, he joined Gatton Academy Leaders in Education and worked with the Bowling Green Housing Authority to help elementary school students learn math and English.

Reilly currently attends Purdue University where he hopes to major in computer engineering and materials engineering and minor in Russian.

"I want to work at a computer part manufacturer," Reilly said.

"However, my dream job would be working for Intel or IBM and do R&D on spintronics, a nascent branch of computing technology that computes using electron spin as opposed to just using electric current."

Tim Isaacs, principal at CHHS, admires Reilly's many talents and leadership skills.

"Jonathan is a phenomenal young man, who has always seemed so comfortable in his own skin," Isaacs said. "Jonathan is a great example of the kind of young person that has so many talents and abilities, and I am blessed as an educator to have the opportunity to work with him.

"You just kind of hope you don't do anything to screw up and cause that kind of student to question their abilities to the point that they lose their way," Isaacs added. "Jonathan was raised in a home that values education and reinforces the importance of building one's life on a firm foundation."

Amy Smith can be reached at 270-505-1416 or asmith@thenewsenterprise.com.

AmySmith