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## NIC Foundation celebrates new Aitken legacy scholarships

Fifteen NIC students received life-changing scholarships this month thanks to the first-ever awards distributed from the Aitken Scholarship Fund.

Each student received \$2,500, as a result of a record-breaking donation from Catherine Mary (Mamie) and Elizabeth (Cherry) Aitken.

“The Aitken fund establishes a new legacy of giving in the Comox Valley,” said Randall Heidt, NIC’s Vice President Strategic Initiatives and Acting Executive Director of the North Island College Foundation. “The Foundation is so grateful for Catherine and Elizabeth’s foresight and deep love of this community. Through these scholarships, their spirit, generosity and commitment are honoured in this lasting legacy.”

The Aitken fund was set up in 2015 following a \$6 million bequest from long-time Comox Valley resident Catherine Mary (Mamie) Aitken to the Comox Valley Community Foundation (CVCF).

NIC Social Services diploma student Megan Lawrence credits the Aitken scholarship for helping her achieve academic excellence.

“My scholarships have allowed me the freedom to study and make school my top priority,” she said. “I am truly thankful NIC Foundation donors chose to support the futures of perfect strangers. These incredible gifts enrich the lives of NIC students and this community. The financial support offers students like me a moment to breathe when we feel caught in the chaos of life.”

Catherine Aitken and her sister Elizabeth were lifelong Comox Valley residents and founding members of the Soroptimist International of Courtenay Club, which has also donated \$61,000 to the NIC Foundation since 1992.

The Aitken bequest, the largest in CVCF history, ensures NIC and community organizations will have access to annual funds from the donation – forever.

In addition to the 15 Aitken scholarship recipients, four students also received NIC Foundation Entrance scholarships.

The Aitken scholarships, valued at \$37,500, bring the total Comox Valley awards this year to an all-time high of more than \$184,000.



*Aitken scholarship recipients celebrated a legacy this month with the NIC Foundation and the Comox Valley Community Foundation. The Aitken fund was set up in 2015 following a \$6 million bequest from long-time Comox Valley residents Catherine Mary (Mamie) Aitken to the Comox Valley Community Foundation. Fifteen NIC students received \$2,500 each this year, the first-ever students to receive the annual awards.*



*NIC Foundation Entrance award winners Jasmin Ford and Livia Hosegrove (front, centre) with NIC Foundation Board members (from left) Mary Lovely, Ilona Horgen, Kathryn Jones and Lisa Moyes.*

NIC Foundation Vice Chair and Treasurer Kathryn Jones said legacy funds like the Aitken scholarships are key to improving the lives of students and their families.

“These gifts are about ensuring that whatever struggles people face as they pursue their education, financial barriers do not stop them from following their dreams,” said Jones. “Having these scholarships and bursaries in place means that year after year, we can make a difference in people’s lives.”

For more information on legacy giving, contact Erin Petersen at 250-334-5085 or Randall Heidt at 250-334-5249.

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