



**PRESS RELEASE (August 13, 2024)**  
**Rebuilding Their Future Foundation, Inc.**  
**Notice of 2024 Scholarship Awards**

The Board of Directors of the Rebuilding Their Future Foundation (RTFF) announced that they have for the third year in a row awarded RTFF scholarships to Olivia Buss of Staten Island, NY and Larkin Garden of Weaverville, NC (photos and bio sketches of the scholarship award winners follow below). The value of each scholarship is \$2,000.

RTFF Board President Michael Trevits said that the RTFF Board is “pleased to make RTFF scholarship awards to both Larkin (her third RTFF scholarship award) and Olivia and he wished them success in their educational endeavors.” He also said that the “Foundation Board is thankful for the receipt of donations to the scholarship fund.”

The nonprofit Rebuilding Their Future Foundation (RTFF) was established in 2018. The mission of the Foundation is to provide scholarships to surviving family members of mine rescue team members, fire fighters, or other emergency first responders who perished or became severely disabled and are unable to execute their job duties. The Board of Directors believe that providing opportunities to reach an educational goal could change the future of a family or family members recovering from the devastating loss or disabling injury of a loved one who was working to save the lives of others. Our focus is to award scholarships for all levels of secondary and postsecondary education to individuals with the desire and intention to earn a high school diploma, complete an approved program of vocational education or training, or acquire a degree from an approved four-year college or university. More information about the Foundation can be found at their website: [rebuildingtheirfuturefoundationinc.org](http://rebuildingtheirfuturefoundationinc.org).

**2024 RTFF Scholarship Award Winners**



**Olivia Buss** is a 2023 Notre Dame Academy High School graduate from Staten Island, NY. She now attends Fairfield University and is enrolled in its Magis Scholars Nursing Program where she is training to become a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) nurse, her career dream. She has been surrounded by those in the medical field her entire life. She has pursued related opportunities throughout high school including lifeguard training, CPR and other emergency response certifications, and volunteering at Staten Island University Hospital. During the summer of 2024, Olivia completed an internship at New York University Medical Center in its Health Career Opportunity Program. She is the youngest of four children in her family and is inspired by the example of her father who, as a member of the New

York City Fire Department, responded immediately and served daily for the next three weeks in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. The physical exposures he encountered eventually led to his permanent disability. Scholarship funding will assist in providing Olivia and her family some financial relief while pursuing her dream of becoming a registered nurse.



**Larkin Garden** is a 2022 graduate of The Martin L. Nesbitt, Jr. Discovery Academy in Ashville, NC near her hometown of Weaverville, NC. Larkin excelled at the Academy while engaging in a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum, working part time, and participating in many volunteer activities in her community. After her father, a former firefighter, was disabled by a life-threatening medical condition, Larkin also assumed additional family-related responsibilities. Larkin is inspired and motivated by her love of nature and the outdoors. Larkin now attends Catawba College as an environmental and sustainability major with minors in geographical information systems (GIS) and technology, ecology, and zoology. Her academic research has enabled her to visit (to date) Rwanda, and Columbia as well as many US national parks. In 2024, she was the top selection for a prestigious, all expenses paid, summer marine research program in hosted by a university in Washington State during which she became a certified scientific SCUBA diver. Larkin is very appreciative that the ability to attend college has introduced her to so many new friends, developed for her an expanded meaning of family, and offered her both travel and future career opportunities that she that never imagined.