



Emerson Uptmor of West, Texas Graciously Accepts the Victor Peter Memorial and Albert J Blaha Memorial Scholarships!

The Czech Heritage Society of Texas (CHS) is proud to announce Emerson Uptmor from West, Texas in McLennan County as the recipient of both the Victor Peter Memorial Scholarship and the Albert J. Blaha Memorial Scholarship for 2024. She is graduating in the top 25% of her class from West High School. Emerson will be attending Texas A&M University in College Station this Fall to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and Biology. Afterwards, she plans to obtain certification as an OB-GYN Sonographer, then gain experience in a hospital and become a traveling OB-GYN Sonographer. Emerson says, "Helping expecting mothers through such an amazing and intimate experience in their lives is my ultimate goal." An active member of the McLennan-Hill Counties Chapter of CHS, Emerson participates and leads activities at chapter meetings and events like Westfest. She has been continually active in her community volunteering at the public library and participating in Czech events like meeting Czech dignitaries visiting the City of West from Kurnovice, Czech Republic teaching them our Czech dances and learning their dances to teach others. She has served as Youth Leader for Young Life and volunteers at local events like Relay for Life. At school, she has maintained a 4.0 plus grade point average while participating in athletics like the Varsity Golf Team, being a member of the Junior Historians Czech Cultural Dance Group, Culinary and Key Clubs, Dazzler Dance Team and participating in University Interscholastic League (U.I.L.) competition while taking dual credit college hours. A highlight of Emerson's athletic involvement came last year when her Golf Team earned their way to the State UIL Golf Tournament in Austin. She states, "It was an amazing experience that I will never forget." Emerson was selected and served as CHS Miss McLennan-Hill Counties Chapter Czech-Slovak Queen in 2023 and then later that year competed and won the state title of CHS Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen 1st Runner Up (2023 - 2024). In this role she represented CHS throughout the State participating in Czech events in Texas communities. She addressed CHS members at chapter and state membership meetings. Many Czech festivals like the National Polka Festival in Ennis and Czech organizations like SPJST called upon her to speak and dance polka and waltzes. Her Great Grandmother, as Emerson explains, "influenced me to pursue my Czech heritage as I helped in the kitchen when making Czech pastries and homemade noodles, listening to Polka music, and teaching me a few polka dances like Apples, Peaches, Pumpkin Pie." Her great Grandmother's sharing of stories about life lessons and stories when she was a little girl led Emerson to understand the importance of being a strong, loving person with a beautiful personality while appreciating her Czech heritage and the struggles her ancestors faced. In Emerson's acknowledgement of receiving these two awards, she wrote "I am completely honored and proud to be receiving both the Victor Peter Memorial and Albert J Blaha Memorial Scholarships! I will be able to use these to fulfill my academic success, and I very graciously appreciate these awards!"

Submitted by Richard Skopik, Scholarship Committee