

## **THE 2015 ELAINE EHLERS ARTS SCHOLARSHIP REED PULEO**

I am Tom Werder, Executive Director of Morris Arts. It is my pleasure tonight to present Morris Arts' two arts scholarship winners. Fourteen years ago, Morris Arts collaborated with Elaine Ehlers' family to initiate a scholarship to be given annually to foster new artistic talent, helping a graduating Morris County high school senior who possesses artistic talent to pursue further study in an area related to the arts. Created as a tribute to the memory of Elaine Ehlers, the scholarship is an enduring legacy to recognize artistic excellence and encourage the artists of the future. Elaine, a health-care administrator by profession, had a voracious appetite for all things artistic and musical. She derived intellectual and emotional sustenance from the arts, and received great pleasure when she took young people to concerts, the theater and museums. Morris Arts invites young artists of Morris County who exhibit artistic excellence in the areas of dance, drama, music and the visual arts to compete for this scholarship.

I am pleased to announce that this year's Elaine Ehlers Arts Scholarship award winner of \$5,000 is Reed Puleo, who lives in Chester and is a graduating senior at West Morris Mendham High School in Mendham.

This talented young percussionist distinguished himself by qualifying for the highly competitive All Eastern Concert Band and for the New Jersey Youth Symphony - with which he toured Europe in 2014, playing in

Salzburg, Vienna, Prague and tying for 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival after performing in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria. His description of that experience reflected his deep appreciation of the transformative joys of high level performance. Reed also qualified for the Juilliard Summer Percussion Seminar where he took masterclasses with Juilliard faculty including top percussionists from the NY Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, the NYC Ballet and Broadway. A second place winner in this year's *Morristown's Got Talent* competition as one of the members of *Marimba Four*, Reed successfully made it through the prescreening process at the Eastman School of Music and was accepted at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. One recommendation opens, "Reed Puleo came to Mendham as not only the top percussionist in the high school but the best in the state. In his freshman year All-State audition, he was first overall with the next closest person 50 points behind." The recommendation praised Reed's exceptional talents and also highlighted his unflinching support for his school music program, despite his commitments to outside training. Another recommendation states, "Very seldom in my teaching career over the past 25 years have I had such a dedicated and driven student who improved so much....Mr. Puleo is fortunate to have such a natural talent in music and the drive to learn as much as possible. Mr. Puleo's love for music and passion to learn is inspirational."

The Arts Scholarship panel jurying this year's applications was unanimous in its choice for the Ehlers Scholarship. They were very impressed by Reed's mastery of multiple instruments, his sensitivity in

phrasing, his dynamic range and expressiveness, his skill with complex mallet technique, and his exceptional musicianship. Therefore, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Morris Arts, it is my great pleasure and privilege to award the fourteenth annual Elaine Ehlers Arts Scholarship to this outstanding young percussionist, Reed Puleo.

Will Reed Puleo please come up to accept his award.

March 25, 2015