THE GEORGE N. BOULUKOS EASTERN ORTHODOX COMMITTEE ON SCOUTING

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR EASTERN ORTHODOX SCOUTING MEMBERS

The Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS) is pleased to announce that scholarships of $1000 will once again be awarded in 2021. To apply, students must be high school seniors who have already received both the highest award of their Scouting organization (Eagle for Scouting BSA and Gold Award for Girl Scouts of the USA) and the highest EOCS religious award, the Alpha Omega medal. Applicants each year are evaluated on how they demonstrate love of God and their Orthodox Christian Faith, and how they live up to Scouting ideals, through scholarship, leadership, community service, and active involvement in their church. All materials must be submitted by May 1, 2021. Information and forms can be found at https://www.eocs.org/scholarship.

The most recent scholarship winners are Aidan Deighan, Elizabeth Schisler, and Robel Tesfaselassie.

Aidan Deighan is a communicant of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Beckley, WV, a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic. He attended Giles High School in Pearisburg, VA, as well as the Southwest Virginia Governor’s School, with several years of coursework at New River Community College (while still in high school), where he was named to the President’s and Dean’s Lists. His many academic and extracurricular distinctions include awards for outstanding achievement in chemistry, statistics, and research, as well as for musical performance (violin, viola, and piano) and production. In Scouting BSA, Aidan most recently was a member of Troop 460 in Pembroke, VA, where he attained the rank of Eagle Scout and was elected to the Order of the Arrow, the “Brotherhood of Cheerful Service.” He has performed extensive community service as part of Scouting and with his church. His Eagle Scout project was to design, build, and install a multifunctional information kiosk and community gathering point with benches for the Town of Pembroke, from negotiating the permits and raising funds to leading the building team. He has served his parish as choir member, chanter, and acolyte, and has used his creative talents to help with children’s musical presentations. He also was a commissioned composer for the Roanoke Ballet Theatre for two years. Aidan is now a freshman at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, where he will study Recording Arts and Sciences with a major in composition.
Elizabeth Schisler is a communicant of the Church of the Annunciation in Montgomery, AL, a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta. She has faithfully served her parish throughout her years there, helping to clean the church after Sunday Liturgy and (for her Girl Scout Silver Award project) renovating key facilities, despite having to travel almost two hours in each direction to get there! Although the small parish could not offer youth programs, Elizabeth made herself known and loved there, and she loves the community as well. She attended Northside Methodist Academy in Dothan, AL, where she received significant academic distinctions, challenged herself with many college courses, and excelled in athletics, especially track, cross-country, and archery. Her strong record of service and leadership includes attaining the Robert F. Lucas Award for serving as an Outstanding Key Club Lieutenant Governor. This past February, she organized a community “Leap Day” run that raised thousands of dollars for a local children’s hospital, and recently organized a successful fund-raiser for a teacher with cancer, by running a half-marathon. Elizabeth was a member of Girl Scout Troop 9124 in Ozark, AL. Along with engaging in many outdoor, civic, and leadership activities, she carried out a Girl Scout Gold Award project to build literacy among a large group of elementary-school children. She designed a two-month, daily summer reading workshop that was fun, active, and success-oriented. She implemented it with excellent results at the local Boys and Girls Club, leading a team of other Scouts to provide focused instruction and attention to the children. The organization plans to run the program again in summers to come. Elizabeth is now attending the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, majoring in Athletic Training with the plan of going on to medical school after graduation.

Robel Tesfaselassie is a communicant of St. Elijah Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City, OK, a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. He attended Deer Creek High School, Edmond, OK, and the Biosciences and Medicine Academy at Francis Tuttle Technology Center, Oklahoma City, OK. He is a National Merit Scholar, a National Advanced Placement Scholar, and has received many other academic and extracurricular distinctions. He has served as his high school’s Academic Team Captain and as a key member of the Debate Team. In Scouting BSA, Robel most recently was a member of Troop 94 in Edmond, OK. He attained the rank of Eagle Scout, was elected to the Order of the Arrow, and has participated in leadership training. He performed extensive community service as part of Scouting and with his church. His Eagle Scout project was to perform several major exterior renovations to a mission church, St. James Orthodox Church in Stillwater, OK. This small church, although not close to Robel’s parish, serves as the center for the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (the Pan-Orthodox campus ministry) in a town with about 27,000 college students. Robel thought it was important to make it an
attractive venue, so he raised funds, designed, and installed exterior fencing around the exposed utility units and presented the church with impressive, eye-catching new granite signage. Despite several months of pandemic-related delays, he nonetheless led a team of Scouts to complete the construction at this distant location. At church, Robel has been active in the youth organization, a leader of Bible Study for youth, and teaches the language of his heritage, Tigrinyan, to Eritrean children. He tutored for Kumon during high school and most recently worked as assistant manager of a local service business. Now Robel is a freshman at Oklahoma University, where he is studying Neuroscience with the goal of earning an MD/PhD and becoming a research physician.

The EOCS is a commission of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA. Formed in 1960, it is tasked with coordinating the Eastern Orthodox Christian Scouting program in America and serving as the officially recognized representative of the Eastern Orthodox Church for both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts nationally. Along with granting annual scholarships (62 since 1993), the EOCS publicizes Eastern Orthodox Christian Scouting, holds retreats, assists in the formation of troops, and offers three age-appropriate religious awards for Scouting members. Eastern Orthodox members of Scouting BSA, Girl Scouts of the USA, Exploring, American Heritage Girls, Trail Life, and Camp Fire are eligible. For more information about any of these topics, visit the EOCS website at www.eocs.org or contact Dr. Miriam E. Kotsonis, EOCS Scholarship Chairman; mekotsonis@gmail.com; (908) 672-0001.