



Metta Students Foundation announces three new Hope High School scholarship winners

Press Release-Putting a smile on other peoples' faces and helping fellow students are just some of the reasons three Hope High School students took charge and got involved in the Special Olympics Project Unify program. This month the Metta Students Foundation is proud to announce they are awarding, Ariel Matos, Jason Roias, and Aaliyah Parham \$1,000 each.

Special Olympics Project UNIFY® says their program is built on the premise that in order to have the greatest impact the change process needs to start with young people. Project UNIFY brings youth with and without intellectual disabilities together through education and sports and related initiatives that provide them with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to create and sustain school communities that promote the acceptance, respect and human dignity for all students.

Roias and Matos coached the school's basketball team while Parham worked with the cheerleaders making Hope High School the first inner city school to participate in Rhode Island. "I like to see others smile and feel good about themselves. I like having an impact on people's lives," states Matos.

That belief reflects the mission of the Metta Students Foundation. Metta means love, kindness and compassion and when the foundation learned about the threesome they decided to award not just one but all three for their acts of kindness, "I thought the program is a great program and not many students help those with special needs," states Roias, "Ariel and I wanted to make a difference in our community in the hopes that other students would follow our example."

Wednesday, March 27, 2013 at 3pm during a pep rally for the first Hope High School Project Unify home basketball game the Metta Students Foundation will make the presentation. Media, city officials, parents, educators, and students are all welcome.

"Whenever attending a Project Unify game at Hope, you are overwhelmed by the enthusiasm, the energy and the passion of the entire school community," states Dennis DeJesus, CEO – Special Olympics Rhode Island. "Athletes, partners, coaches, cheerleaders, administrators, fellow students and parents - it has become a community of acceptance, inclusion and respect. Hope High School embodies the mission and vision of Project Unify and it's "all in" approach is transforming that school community. Go Hope!"

Cheerleading Coach Aaliyah Parham, embodies that go Hope and Metta spirit stating, "I got involved with unified basketball because I've always had a good time when talking to special needs children so when I was informed that there was going to be a whole cheerleading team revolved around that, I was ecstatic and knew I wanted to be a part of it."

Metta Students Founder Norm Kelly is CEO of Software Quality Associates in Providence and says his company has always wanted to give back to the community. "I love the uniqueness of Metta Students," says Kelly, "we are honoring high school kids for their acts of loving-kindness. You do not have to be the smartest or most athletic to be honored with a Metta Student Foundation Scholarship."

The ceremony will take place at the Hope High School gymnasium located at 324 Hope St. in Providence, followed by the game. To see video of how the Metta Students foundation began or for more information about the foundation log onto www.mettastudentsfoundation.org. If you are interested in doing a story please contact Laura Clarizio at 617-852-7784 or lauraclarizio@aol.com.