

## **NISWONGER FOUNDATION SELECTS FIVE NEW SCHOLARS**

The NISWONGER FOUNDATION, founded by Greeneville, Tennessee businessman and philanthropist Scott M. Niswonger, has selected five high school seniors to join the Niswonger Scholars program. Currently, there are 21 Niswonger Scholars, with the newly selected students for 2017 bringing the total to 26. The Foundation also has 61 alumni of the program.

The Niswonger Foundation is leaving our mark in this region with the Niswonger Scholars. We know of no other Scholarship and Leadership program like ours in the United States. Niswonger Scholars are selected through a nomination process that seeks to identify the region's best and brightest future leaders. They are given the opportunity to attend the college or university that will best prepare them for success in their field of study, while participating in our four-year leadership program. Through an emphasis on leadership, business management, community service and ethical decision making, the Scholars are provided travel, training, internships, and personalized support to become model leaders and citizens of the world.

What makes our program unique to all other scholarships is that the goal is to identify and develop leaders for Northeast Tennessee. These students commit to returning, within seven years, to Northeast Tennessee to work in their chosen career one year for each year they receive our scholarship. The plan is that by enabling these students to pursue their academic passion and by cultivating their leadership abilities, they will be committed to returning to their "roots" and being catalysts for the growth and improvement of their communities.

The five new Northeast Tennessee Scholars are Austin Blazer, Cocke County High School; Brittany Church, Johnson County High School; Emily Ellison, Cocke County High School; Lorraine Hayes, Cloudland High School; Tyler Myers, Tennessee High School.



**Austin Levi Blazer** is a student at **Cocke County High School**. He ranks first in his class and has a 4.0 GPA. He serves as president of Future Business Leaders of America; president of Student Council and Editor of the Annual Staff school news. He is a member of Cross Country, Track and Field, Tennis, Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Beta Club, Principal's Student Council, National Honor Society, Math Club and Scholar's Bowl. His awards include, Future Business Leaders of America Regional Competition, English I Honors, AP Human Geography, Student of the Week and Tennessee American Legion Boys State. He has given of his time in service to Friends of Tennessee's Babies, Edgemont Elementary School, Angel Tree Ministries and Cocke County Board of Education. Austin is the son of Tony and Gayla Blazer.



**Brittany Renee Church** attends **Johnson County High School**. She serves as vice president and Brass Captain of Johnson County Marching Band, secretary of Latin Club and Sergeant in Arms of National Technical Honors Society. She is a member of National Honors Society, Chess Club, Latin Club, National Latin Honors Society, Media Club, Motorsports Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and East Tennessee State University's Upward Bound Program. Her awards include, Johnson County High School Band Merit Award and Director's Award. She has volunteered her time at Johnson City Medical Center, Niswonger Children's Hospital and Calvary Baptist Church. Brittany is the daughter of Tammy Ramsey and Billy Church.



**Emily Laurel Ellison** is a student at **Cocke County High School** with a 4.0 GPA. She serves as president of Future Farmers of America and Tennessee Junior Sheep Producers Association. Her awards include, Tennessee Governor's School for Agriculture, State Future Farmers of America Delegate, National Leadership Forum, National Honor Society Inductee, Mu Alpha Theta Inductee, Regional FFA Dairy Judging CDE High Individual, FFA Leadership Award, 3<sup>rd</sup> place in National Dorset Yearling Futurity and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in National Dorset Lamb Futurity. She is a member of Cocke County 4-H, Future Farmers of America, American Shropshire Registry, Continental Dorset Club, Tennessee Junior Sheep Producer's Association, Beta Club and Round Mountain Baptist Church. She has given her time in service to Northwest Elementary School, Lions Club, Freewill Baptist Women's Auxiliary Horse Show, Samaritan's Purse and FFA Gentle Touch Ministries Food Drive. Emily is the daughter of Wesley and Patricia Ellison.



**Lorraine Faith Hayes** is a student at **Cloudland High School** where she serves as senior class president, president and founder of English Club, president of Relay for Life Club, president of the Bible History Club, co-founder, secretary and treasurer of the Student Government Association, Youth Leadership Delegate and captain of CHS Varsity Cheer Squad. She is a member of National Society of High School Scholars, International Distinguished Scholars Honor Society, Beta Club, Drama Club, Relay for Life Club, HOSA Club, Chorus Club and Bible History Club. Her awards include, Honorary Usher at Senior Honors and Commencement, Highest ACT Score Award, Principal's Pride Award, UCA All-American Cheerleader, Most Versatile Cheerleader Award, Christian Fellowship Center International Ministries Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation for Volunteer Work and Christian Fellowship Center International Ministries Most Outstanding Youth Award. She has served her community through MARSH Regional Blood Center, Philippines Feeding Ministry, Camp Christian Challenge, Valley Forge Day Camp, Johnson

City Medical Center, Operation Christmas Child and Salvation Army. Lorraine is the daughter of Eloine and Jeffery Hayes.



**Tyler James Myers** attends **Tennessee High School** with a 4.0 GPA and ranks first in his class. He is president of Health Occupation Students of America. He was voted Best All-around Senior Superlative by his peers. He served as American Legion Tennessee Boys State Delegate. He was selected for Student Congress on Policies in Education. He is Homecoming King and Honor Court King Senior Class. He is a member of National Honor Society, Beta Club and Student Council. He is founder, president and CEO of a self-employed business, *Poor Boy Gadgets*. *He is Assistant Tournament Director at Velocity Sports Performance*. He serves his community with Highlands Fellowship Church, Bristol TN/VA Chamber of Commerce, Love-N-People, Tennessee High School and Adaptive Aquatics. Tyler is the son of Corey and Denise Myers.