

OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL | Senior is named a Horatio Alger scholar

# \$20,000 scholarship buys a little relief

**Sohail Jouya keeps busy with classes, debate, club memberships and volunteer work.**

By JILL SEDERSTROM  
Special to The Star

One senior at Oak Park High School just got \$20,000 wealthier — but it wasn't without a lot of hard work and determination.

The money is a college scholarship given to students across the nation who have overcome significant adversity.

Oak Park High School student Sohail Jouya is one of two students in Missouri to be named a 2007 Horatio Alger National Scholar.

For Jouya, the \$20,000 scholarship will allow him to pursue college options that may not have been possible before.

"It was a heavy burden that was lifted off my shoulders," he said.

The North Kansas City School District student lives on his own and works to help pay his bills, which during the summer can mean up to 60-hour work weeks.

Throughout it all, he's kept good grades even with a rigorous high school schedule that includes three college-level classes.

He's also a nationally ranked



Sohail Jouya

debater who has competed in the national debate championship each year since his freshman year of high school.

With a schedule this hectic, Jouya has to make sure he is using his time to be as efficient as possible.

"Normally you have to make time that isn't really there," Jouya said.

When one of his teachers gives his class a 10-minute break to talk amongst themselves, Jouya uses that time to work on

homework or college scholarship applications. And when he's not working, doing homework or debating, he's usually volunteering.

"His planner looks like a strategic map for something," said Lori Dameron, the school's gifted resource teacher.

Jouya is a member of the International Relations Council, a group fostering active participation in international relations and a greater understanding of world affairs. His involvement in the council gave him the opportunity to speak to group members and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright about the group's mission and what it has meant to him.

He's also a member of the United Nations Association of the United States of America Student Alliance and his school's diversity club.

In his spare time, Jouya mentors younger debate students about everything from how to make the best argument to how to tie a tie.

"There's a great group of kids

there and I wouldn't give up my time with them for anything," he said.

Volunteering is so important to Jouya because he wants to give back to a community that has given him so much.

"I think that it's an obligation that every individual in society has," he said.

With graduation approaching and his scholarship in hand, Jouya is starting to look toward the future.

In April, he'll travel to Washington, D.C., to accept the scholarship with the 105 other recip-

ients from across the nation.

"It's possible to do anything with enough work ethic," he said.

Jouya plans to attend William Jewell College, where he hopes to be part of the school's Oxbridge honors program.

It's a program that Jouya may not have even been able to consider without the help of the scholarship, which isn't lost on his teachers.

"I saw it as just a door opening," Dameron said. "Just to know he is going to get to a better place, that is really our goal."

## MARRIAGE LICENSES

Issued in Clay County the week of Jan. 29:

■ Terrell Eugene Lowe, 49, of Kansas City to Nancy Louise Thompson, 43, of Liberty

■ Johnathon Allan Raw, 21, of Excelsior Springs to Ashlee Nicole Parsons, 21, of Excelsior Springs

■ Emilio Duran Jr., 19, of North Kansas City to Alexcia Suzanne Grado, 19, of North Kansas City

■ Ryan James Cameron Tuttle, 21, of Excelsior Springs to April Michael Oliver, 20, of Excelsior Springs

■ Andrew Ray Yoakum, 26, of Holt to Danielle Marie Oberfoell, 23, of Holt

■ Chad Christopher Dysvick, 24, of Lee's Summit to Lillia Isabel Toson, 21, of Lee's Summit

■ Kyle Steven Morris, 24, of Kearney to Heather Marie Herndon, 22, of Kearney

■ Tyler Jacob West, 21, of Liberty to Katherine Suzanne Gulgley, 20, of Liberty

■ Harvey Robert Leavitt, 72, of Kansas City to Debra Denise Holtsclaw, 55, of Kansas City

■ Mohammad Tahir Samayee, 54 Kansas City to Stephanie Zaragoza, 47, of Kansas City

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