

News for Immediate Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2017

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Illinois Conservation Foundation Announces 2017 Conservation Achievement Scholarship Winners

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF) today announced the selections of Patricia Calderon of Chicago and Jacob Handel of Sycamore as recipients of the 2017 Conservation Achievement Scholarships. Both high school seniors will receive \$2,000 to apply to specified expenses at the two- or four-year college or university of their choice.

"Through the Conservation Achievement Scholarship program, the ICF is able to recognize and reward the hard work on conservation stewardship and natural resources protection being done by outstanding youth in Illinois," said Wayne Rosenthal, chairman of the Illinois Conservation Foundation Board of Directors and Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. "We congratulate Paty Calderon and Jacob Handel for their passion and dedication to making our natural world a better place, and setting a great example for all of us."

Patricia Calderon, Whitney Young Magnet High School, Chicago

Paty Calderon's interest in environmental stewardship included involvement in frog call monitoring, removing invasive plants, and participating in park and beach cleanups during her freshman year at Whitney Young Magnet High School in Chicago. As a sophomore, she interned at the Environmental Law and Policy Center in Chicago, and helped organize high school students to attend a legislative lobby day in Springfield. Paty helped organize the Chicago Youth Alliance for Climate Action, working with students from throughout the city on issues including clean water and climate change. During her junior year, she and fellow students organized the Eco Warriors, a team hosting workshops on environmental issues for high school freshmen, while she also continued educating hundreds of neighborhood elementary school students about the importance of the environment. Paty received a scholarship to

spend the summer of 2016 conducting marine research at the Island School of the Bahamas. Patricia Calderon plans to attend Pomona College in Claremont, California.

Jacob Handel, Sycamore High School, Sycamore

Jacob Handel focused his love of the outdoors and his interest in community service by constructing shelters at a local wildlife center as his Eagle Scout project. He has served as a volunteer at Russell Woods Forest Preserve in DeKalb Co., hosting information stations during community events and working on invasive species control and tree planting at the preserve. Jacob participated in aquatic invertebrate research as part of the Environmental Science Kishwaukee Watershed course in conjunction with Northern Illinois University, including summer field work and in-class research projects when school resumed. As a high school senior, he has served as a teaching assistant, working with students on collecting and identifying samples. Jacob wrote: "For just about every school project, I find some way to include the environment. I'm passionate about it. In my own backyard, I am working to restore an area to native tallgrass prairie." Jacob Handel plans to attend Iowa State University in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"Congratulations to our scholarship recipients, and thanks to the generosity of all of the donors to the Illinois Conservation Foundation's scholarship fund," said Eric Schenck, ICF Executive Director. "The Conservation Achievement Scholarship program has been able to provide more than \$100,000 in support to the academic endeavors of young conservationists from throughout Illinois."

Applicants for the ICF Conservation Achievement Scholarship program must be outstanding high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and/or promotion of Illinois' natural resources. Other criteria also apply. ICF Conservation Achievement Scholarships are made possible through donations to the foundation. For more information, check the ICF website at www.ilcf.org.

For information on donating to and supporting the Conservation Achievement Scholarships or other ICF programs, contact the foundation at 217-785-2003, or donate online at www.ilcf.org.