

Charter Academy graduates seven in Littleton

ANGEL LARCOM

angel@salmonpress news

LITTLETON — The North Country Charter Academy held a commencement exercise for seven graduates at the Mount Eustis Commons last Sunday. The ceremony was one of three graduations hosted by the school, and the only one to occur in Littleton.

NCCA is New Hampshire's oldest and most successful charter school founded in part by Raymond S. Burton, the late Executive Councilor for the North Country. The school has offered an alternative approach to education that incorporates blended learning techniques for the last 16 years.

The 2020 graduating class included 28 students, 21 of whom attend-



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Noah Grabowski graduated from the North Country Charter Academy with the President's Academic Excellence Award and scholarships from the Littleton American Legion and the Perry A. and Zelma O. Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund.

ed school at the Lancaster campus and seven at the Littleton site. To date, 554 students from 45 different communities have successfully earned their diplomas at NCCA, spanning more than 4,000 square miles of the North Country.

The mid-afternoon graduation was held out-

doors at the Mount Eustis Commons on Cottage Street. All attendees wore masks and gloves, and social distancing of at least six feet was maintained at all times, marking it one of the few commencements in the area to use such an event model.

Garrett Fuller, Timothy Gensamer, Noah

Grabowski, Christian O'Neil, Connor Pillsbury, Jarvis Sottile and Caleb Trahan received diplomas from NCCA Superintendent, Lisa Lavoie. The keynote speaker was Kate Cassidy, a ten-year Board Chair veteran for NCCA who currently serves on the NH State
CHARTER GRADS, PAGE A100

GRADS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1)

School Board.

In her opening address, Lavoie said, "We can never take it for granted that we are here. This is a meaningful event and one of the most important in your lives. We truly believe that education is the most important weapon to change the world."

Cassidy spoke of often-overlooked inspirations.

She said, "The most amazing things happen in high school when we least expect them. As you look forward to your future, I encourage you to take the time and look for these moments. They will be your inspiration for life."

Nearly every graduate received recognition of outstanding attendance during their time at NCCA. The Chairpersons' Award and the Raymond S. Burton Award recipients were announced, as well as three academic awards and two scholarships.

The Chairpersons' Award, given to a student who overcame significant life obstacles while



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North Country Charter Academy Superintendent Lisa Lavoie addressed the charter school's 2020 graduates and a commencement ceremony held at Mount Eustis Commons last Sunday.

maintaining the commitment to achieving a high school diploma, was awarded to Connor Pillsbury. Pillsbury transferred from White Mountains Regional High School to NCCA in February.

Pillsbury maintained a 90 percent GPA and perfect attendance while working 25 to 30 hours a week at the Littleton Walmart and participating in the WMRHS Vocational Welding Program. He is enrolled in Manchester Community College's Automotive Program and intends to focus on European vehicles.

Caleb Trahan was the 2020 recipient of the Raymond S. Burton Award, which is given to a stu-

dent who possesses the character traits that symbolize the work and accomplishments of the late Executive Councilor. Throughout his high school career Trahan had a strong desire to be involved in community service and projects designed to better people. He enlisted in the Marines in 2019 with an eight-year service contract. He intends to earn a degree in Criminal Justice while serving and his goal is to become an FBI agent in Boston.

The Presidential Academic Excellence Award recipient for 2020 was Noah Grabowski, who enrolled at NCCA in 2019 after being home schooled for two years. Grabows-



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Caleb Trahan was the 2020 recipient of the Raymond S. Burton Award at the North Country Charter Academy graduation ceremony on May 31.

ki attended Boys State, a prestigious program sponsored by the American Legion that allows for learning-by-doing experiences.

Grabowski also received a \$500 scholarship from the Littleton American Legion and a \$250 scholarship from the Perry A. and Zelma O. Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund. The new graduate plans to attend Full Sail University in Winter Park, FL, focusing on Music Production and Recording Arts.

Timothy Gensamer received the President's Academic Achievement Award, a distinction reserved for students who perform above and

beyond all expectations. Gensamer was home schooled before enrolling at NCCA. According to Lavoie he participated in the Youth Leadership Council and had all the qualities of a community leader.

During the diploma ceremony the seven gloved and masked graduates picked up their diplomas from a table to avoid direct contact. At the same time, their family members looked on from several yards' distance. The students were allowed to remove their masks briefly to pose for photos with their diplomas. At commencement's end, their family members honked car horns in celebration.