

1,100 Buick Achievers Earn \$4.2 Million In Scholarships Funded by GM Foundation

Students pursuing careers in STEM, information technology and other automotive-related fields have been awarded about \$4.2 million in scholarships.

The funds went to 1,100 recipients through the Buick Achievers Scholarship Program, funded by the General Motors Foundation.

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, STEM jobs are projected to grow by 17 percent by 2018.

Marie Mainville, manager of GM Foundation and Corporate Relations Communications said, "With the future of manufacturing and many other industries driven by new technologies, the Buick Achievers Scholarship Program strives to inspire young people to pursue STEM careers applicable to the automotive industry.

"Being selected as a national Buick Achievers Scholarship recipient will provide me with significant resources critical to earning a mechanical engineering degree," said Victoria Lee, 2013 Buick Achievers recipient and student at Brown University. "I encourage any student interested in studying STEM-related fields to consider applying for this program."

Buick Achievers is one of the largest scholarship programs in the country and places a strong focus on recognizing women, minorities and students known for excelling in the classroom and giving back to their communities, Mainville said. Special consideration is intended to assist students who are first-generation college students, military veterans and military dependents.

Among the 1,100 students being recognized this year, more than 521 recipients are the first in their families to pursue a secondary education, 45 have served in the United States Armed Forces, and 48 come from military families, Mainville said. Additionally, 819 are pursuing STEM-related majors, with degree programs such as mechanical engineering topping the list.

"Through the Buick Achievers Scholarship Program, the GM Foundation is able to make a significant investment in the next generation of our country's leaders and innovators," said GM Foundation President Vivian

Credit Approvals Reach 2013 High

Customer credit approvals on vehicle lease transactions this year have increased to 75.6 percent through July, up from 73.9 percent through June.

The July percentage is the highest cumulative average recorded so far this year, according to Swapalease.com, the nation's largest car lease marketplace.

Historical data show that 70 percent approval is considered healthy for the online car lease marketplace, which matches a person looking to exit a vehicle with a car shopper looking to take over a short-term lease.

The current approval rate of 75.6 compares with last year's 61.6 percent year-to-date approvals through July of last year.

"Now that our credit approvals rate is resting near 75 percent, the majority of customers processing transactions are believed to be looking for upgrades to their previous vehicle," said Scot Hall, executive vice president of Swapalease.com.

"The health rate of consumer credit in many cases gives drivers the confidence to upgrade into a vehicle category that's considered higher than their previous vehicle."

Pickard. "We have witnessed firsthand how this scholarship is changing lives by making education more accessible and affordable."

With the addition of this year's scholarships, Buick Achievers has awarded nearly \$16.5 million to about 3,300 students since the program's inception in 2011, Mainville said.

The program provides 100 students with up to \$25,000 renewable for four years, and one additional year for those entering a qualified, five-year engineering program. Additionally, 1,000 students receive up to \$2,000 for academic expenses.

"The Buick Achievers Scholarship Program, with the GM Foundation, is modeling the way with

multi-year renewable awards that not only help students get to school, they also help them get through school," said Greg Dehn, general manager and senior vice president, Scholarship America.

General Motors and the GM Foundation have a long history of investing in education initiatives, Mainville said. Since 2007, the GM Foundation has invested more than \$42 million in educational programs and institutions to help nurture tomorrow's innovators and leaders.

In addition to Buick Achievers, the GM Foundation provides approximately \$3 million to key institutions and professional organizations through its annual University Grants program to advance STEM curricula.

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