



L to r: John Stevens (NPH), Glenn Barnett (NPH) Eric Geenen, Norm Beal (Peninsula Estates Winery), Bruce Mackenzie (NPH), Zakhar Husak [Photos: Sandy Darling (NPH)]

Two Local High School Students Receive \$500.00 Scholarships

On Thursday 7 July 2016 two local students were presented with \$500.00 scholarships at Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant.

The scholarships to post-secondary schools have been made available through the generosity of Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant and the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH). The winning students, Mr. Eric Geenen and Mr. Zakhar Husak, both of Hamilton, participated in the 2016 scholarship competition offered by the NPH at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby during the Hawkwatch conducted there this spring.



Zakhar Husak

Zakhar is finishing Grade 10 and is home schooled. Eric is completing Grade 12 at Cardinal Newman Catholic High School and will be starting at McMaster University in the fall, studying Life Sciences. Zakhar will be receiving his scholarship upon his future completion of Grade 12 and upon acceptance at a post-secondary school. The scholarship competition was available to students in the Hamilton-Niagara area.

Students applying for the scholarship had to complete three phases. First, an essay showing a student's interest in observing the hawk migration at Beamer Conservation Area in Grimsby was required. This was followed by a minimum of 15 hours spent at the Hawkwatch observing and learning about migrating hawks, eagles, ospreys and vultures with experienced counters. Upon

completion of the observation period, students were then required to submit an essay on their work and the significance of the Hawkwatch.

Originally the NPH offered one \$500.00 scholarship which Mr. Norm Beal, President of the Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant, generously offered to sponsor. Upon reviewing the students' work the NPH found that the top two



Eric Geenen

students were of equal caliber and both worthy of a scholarship. The NPH then complemented Peninsula Ridge's donation by offering a second \$500.00 scholarship.

In a statement Bruce Mackenzie, Special Projects Director of the NPH, said "The committee was extremely pleased with Eric's and Zakar's contributions at the Hawkwatch, and the expertise evident in their final essays. Both doubled the number of hours required at Beamer this spring, and really showed their interest in hawk ecology. The generous contribution from Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery is so important to the further contribution of this citizen science project and helping out with the future of these young students of science."

Mr. Norm Beal, President of Peninsula Ridge stated "Peninsula Ridge is proud to be a contributor to such a worthy cause. Connecting today's youth with our unique and local ecology is extremely important if we are to ensure long term sustainability of our natural environment".

The Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant, located at 5600 King Street in Beamsville, is situated right under the spring hawk migration corridor along the beautiful Niagara Escarpment.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch has just completed its 42nd year of observing migrating hawks, eagles, vultures and ospreys at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area this spring. Each spring members of the Hawkwatch count and record the migrating raptors passing through Niagara from March 1st until May 15 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm every day. On average approximately 15,000 migrating raptors of 16 different species are counted. The data is submitted to the Hawk Migration Association of North America. It is used for scientific research and developing policies for protection of raptors.

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