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Mount Mercy Student Is Heading to Yale

Mount Mercy sophomore Olivia Larson was accepted into the 2018 Yale Young Global Scholars (YYGS) program. This accomplishment is outstanding on its own merit but when considering that 5500 high school sophomores and juniors from all 50 states and 126 different countries applied for the Yale Young Global Scholars Program and less than 900 students were accepted from the United States, the feat becomes even more impressive.

The Yale website describes the program as “a summer program dedicated to international exchange and liberal arts education, YYGS seeks to empower the next generation of leaders by building a global community and designing interdisciplinary programs that foster intellectual curiosity, deepen understanding and inspire creative action across all borders”.

Larson will be attending the Sustainable Development and Social Entrepreneurship session of Yale Young Global Scholars. This session is focused on “on exploring innovative solutions to the greatest challenges facing the international community today, and aims to prepare students to tackle problems related to particular areas of interest, including global health, international development, environmental sustainability, and gender equality”.

After receiving an email from Yale about the program and doing some research, Larson was convinced that she needed to apply. “I was impressed by the accomplishments of the alumni of the program, and wanted the opportunity to learn from Yale University professors,” Larson commented.

She also said that many of the program’s alumni end up going to highly competitive schools such as Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Chicago. Larson also noted that two of the YYGS alumni just received the Rhodes scholarship and David Marshall Scholarship.

The application process for the program was quite extensive. Larson had to submit standardized test scores, teacher letters of recommendation, a resume, transcript, and three essays. She wrote an essay on women’s rights in Latin America, the importance of being bilingual in Buffalo, and how music and her education have influenced her life.

Although she still has two years of high school left, Larson has a potential career path in mind. “I would love to work for the United Nations or for our government. I plan to study international affairs or political science for undergraduate and then go to law or business school,” Larson stated.

Larson believes that this program will be a prodigious asset in her future. “The program focuses on the United Nations Sustainable Development goals which will help me to understand and foster solutions for global issues as I would if I worked for an international organization,” Larson said. “The program focuses on issues such as gender inequality, international development, global health and environmental sustainability which are all important issues when working for the United Nations or the United States Government. I feel learning about these topics will help to make me a more informed citizen as well.”

As one would expect, Larson is an outstanding student at Mount Mercy. Larson consistently attains First Honor status and is a McAuley scholar. She is the sophomore class president, an assistant section editor on the yearbook staff, a member of mock trial and a student ambassador. In addition, after representing Mount Mercy at the Mercy International Leadership Conference last June, she helped execute the Mercy Girls Rising Project at Mount Mercy. The Mercy Rising project is a fund-raising project to support the rebuilding of a school on the border of Nigeria and Cameroon that was destroyed by the Boko Haram. She also assisted senior Julia Houry, with her Make Lemonade Foundation for Cerebral Palsy fundraiser. Outside of school Larson is a gifted musician who loves to sing and perform

locally. She also manages a project called Seeds of Change. This program helps alleviate childhood poverty in the city of Buffalo, where the poverty rate is forty-four percent.

“I was super excited to be accepted into this program. I dream of going to an Ivy League school and I believe that getting accepted into this prestigious pre-college program is a big step toward fulfilling this dream,” Larson concluded.

She is daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Larson, Jr. of Orchard Park.



Mount Mercy Academy

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