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Shelby Township Student Pursues Entrepreneurship Through Hillsdale College Fellowship

The Kehoe Family Initiative for Entrepreneurial Excellence prepares students to launch successful businesses.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Abriana Badalamenti of Shelby Township was selected as a fellow of Hillsdale College’s Kehoe Family Initiative for Entrepreneurial Excellence. The fellowship is a five-semester program for Hillsdale College students who aim to join the free market as entrepreneurs after graduation. Sophomores of all majors were invited to apply during the fall 2024 semester.

Badalamenti is pursuing a major in psychology. Her business idea as the sister of someone with special needs is creating a nonprofit organization that is a simplified resource for the special needs community, where all individuals of the community can find local events, unique sensory products, apparel, and education that spreads awareness and best improves the lives of those with special needs and their families.

“I am particularly excited about the various opportunities the program offers to help me with my goal to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in the special needs community,” Badalamenti said.

Other members of the new cohort include:

- Hershey Athysivam | Dallas, Texas | politics major and journalism minor
- Eva Bessette | Dallas, Texas | art major
- Luke Burmeister | Bloomfield Hills, Michigan | intended psychology major and biology and chemistry minors
- Alex Cho | Fullerton, California | economics major and entrepreneurship minor

- Isabelle Ellis | Silver Springs, Maryland | intended rhetoric & media and history majors and German minor
- Trevor Hall | Lexington, Massachusetts | physics major and math minor
- Nathaniel Mack | Clyde, Michigan | intended marketing major and computer science and entrepreneurship minors
- Andriy Pasichnyk | Troy, Michigan | economics major
- Nathan Scoffield | Three Forks, Montana | politics major
- Nathaniel Shackelford | Bay Village, Ohio | intended English major
- Luke Waters | Williamsburg, Virginia | English major

“Entrepreneurship, the right to forge one’s own livelihood, is an important example of the freedom Hillsdale College stands for,” said Ken Koopmans, founding director of the Kehoe Family Initiative for Entrepreneurial Excellence. “It is our privilege and responsibility to prepare our students to succeed as entrepreneurs guided by the principles of virtuous civic engagement.”

Fellows take two business courses, participate in seminars and workshops, and hear from established entrepreneurs through the Executive Speaker Series. They also have access to The Experts’ Nexus, a group of alumni and other professionals willing to mentor them. Fellows receive education in the principles of free enterprise, create their own business plans, and launch their businesses. The initiative awards a \$10,000 scholarship over the course of five semesters to each accepted student.

The program started when Koopmans spoke with Kevin Kehoe, an entrepreneur who owned a consulting firm and founded a software company. With a generous gift to Hillsdale College, Kehoe founded the Kehoe Family Initiative for Entrepreneurial Excellence, which welcomed its first cohort in 2021. Although Kehoe died of cancer in 2022, the program continues his legacy of virtuous entrepreneurship.

To learn more about the Kehoe Family Initiative for Entrepreneurial Excellence, click [here](#). For headshots of the fellows, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.7 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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