



**2023 Recipient ~ Jadamarie Henry**  
**Sacred Heart Greenwich, Class of 2025**

My name is Jadamarie and over the summer of 2022 members of the Sacred Heart basketball program, including myself, volunteered with a program named EPIC. EPIC is an organization that works with challenged and disabled teens, mostly teens suffering from autism. The organization provides an outlet for these teens, giving them an opportunity to indulge in activities and sports with other teens suffering from the same challenges as them. The program helps with their socialization skills, communication skills, and their participation skills and effort. The basketball program and idea of a sport gives them a challenge while still being able to have fun. Basketball teaches them the idea of teamwork, sportsmanship, hustle and competition; even if they may not grasp all those skills on the first session. With EPIC hosting this program, it allows the teens to get out of the house, meet new people, and make new friends besides those they may see at school or their family members. They are able to interact with new peers, workers, and volunteers. During my time with EPIC, I volunteered for 1 to 2 hours a day, and 1 day a week. While volunteering I helped conduct basketball drills, pass the basketballs, and encourage, communicate, and connect with the teens. I had a great experience learning about kids my age who struggle with different disabilities and being able to help them. Basketball is one of the most important and constant things in my life currently and I was grateful to be able to share my knowledge, skills, and love of the sport. Volunteering with EPIC allowed me to see how other people enjoy the sport in many different ways. My time with EPIC taught me how basketball offers much more than the sport itself. It offers connections, relationships, and bonding while enjoying an active activity as well. It was such a joy to see some of the kids become extremely excited over the sport or after mastering a new skill, and it was a fun challenge motivating a few of the less enthusiastic ones as well.