



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Date: February 6, 2018

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## **New Threshold Program Graduates Four from the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences**

Hinckley - The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) on the Good Will-Hinckley (GWH) campus started a new program this past September called Threshold. Threshold is for high school students who have life challenges that make it difficult for them to attend school regularly: they may be pregnant and/or a parent or have physical and/or emotional challenges that make it difficult to attend.

Certified teachers teach and advise the student in the students' home (whenever possible), through the Internet, as well as on the MeANS campus. Each student is assigned one primary teacher/advisor who will help them to complete high school.

On Thursday, February 1, MeANS held its first graduation for Threshold. Four students earned the required standards to complete their high school diploma: Dakota Buzzell of North Anson, Makayla Coyne of Waterville, Rebecca Abbott of Madison and Kala Hunkler of Skowhegan. Over forty people attended the ceremony to congratulate the graduates.

Christie Bane greeted the students and audience as the keynote speaker. Christie graduated from the Passages Program, a home-visiting program similar to Threshold, over 16 years ago. Christie spoke a little about her journey to where she is now – a mother of two sons 14 and 17 years old, a graduate student at Thomas College, and a very successful employee at Pride Manufacturing. She was open and told the students of her struggles on the way to her success, "On my way to those great things I've failed, been fired, started college no less than four times, been through a divorce, cried countless tears and have made a dozens of mistakes that I fully owned." She quoted Winston Churchill, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

The advisors/teachers Kenlyn Clark and Juliana Rothschild presented awards to each student. Dakota received the "Dark Humor Award" from Rothschild for his ability to find irony in difficult situations and lift others spirits. Rothschild also presented Kala with the "Creative Spark Award" to be able to find and capture natural beauty in the world through photography and writing. Rebecca received the "Hell and High Water Award" from Rothschild for the ability to weather the storms of daily life and rise above. Kenlyn Clark presented Makayla with the "Focus Award", because she was able to stay focused on the end goal even through some major changes and struggles.

Rob Moody, Executive Director of GWH stated, "All things are possible if you have belief and are willing to work for it. We're so proud of the staff and students for all their hard work, commitment and focus." GWH and MeANS congratulates all four of the graduates and sends wishes for continued success. For more information about MeANS and Threshold, go to the website page at [www.gwh.org/means](http://www.gwh.org/means) or contact Lisa Sandy at [lsandy@gwh.org](mailto:lsandy@gwh.org).

