

# Jing Williams receives UWAC award

MIDDLEBURY — United Way of Addison County fosters community service for all community members, but especially for youth in Addison County. In that spirit, UWAC honors a local high school senior through the UWAC Youth Volunteer Scholarship Award. Jing Williams of Waltham is the 2025 United Way of Addison County Youth Volunteer Scholarship Award recipient this year.

On behalf of a generous donor, one student is chosen annually for the award, recognizing a high school senior who has volunteered in their community and is interested in advancing their education. This award comes with a \$3,000 scholarship for the Addison County student to be used for post-graduation education.

Williams was introduced



**JING WILLIAMS**

to volunteering at a young age, growing up in a service-oriented household and often attending community events. As a sophomore, Jing made a weekly commitment to volunteer at Homeward Bound: Addison County's Humane Society. That same year, Williams attended the first meeting of a new youth service group, the LEOS Club, under the Vergennes Lions, and she never looked back!

"It has been really nice to be part of a group of like-minded individuals who want to get involved in our greater community," said Jing. "Through the LEOS Club, I have been part of several volunteer efforts, including reading to elementary schoolers, making bird cages at the Otter Creek Wildlife Rescue, and

administering eye tests to children. This past year, I had the opportunity to create my senior project with the Club at the Vergennes Community Food Shelf."

Williams's senior project with the Food Shelf has involved improving energy efficiency in the Food Shelf's space. Working closely with Director Paul Vachon, she helped coordinate the installation of heat pumps, improved insulation, new windows, and painting the floor. In addition, Williams helped write grants and find money to support the project. As a result of her efforts, the Leos have established a long-term partnership with the Food Shelf, hoping to return every year for service projects.

Cookie Steponaitis, the Adult Mentor for the Vergennes LEOS Club, said, "What sets Jing apart from many her age is her willingness to jump in and learn from the ground up. Before joining us, she was already a leader, but her work in LEOS kicked her skill set into high gear. She has been a part of every major project we have undertaken since 2022. We are honored to have been a part of her early years of community work. I know she will continue to lead as a Lion, community advocate, and teenager who already knows the power of many hands making light work."

After graduating from Vergennes Union High School, Williams plans to attend Lehigh University to major in Journalism and English.