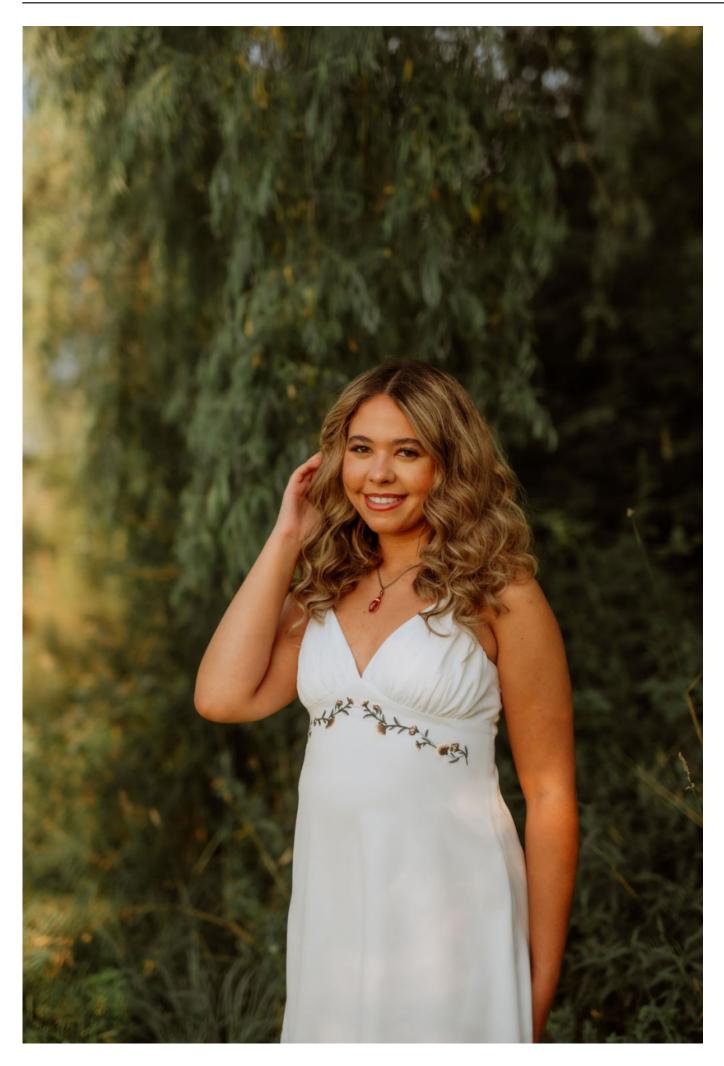
Anna Beresford Wins Inner Light Writing Scholarship - Donates Entire \$10,000 Prize to Charity



New Britain, Connecticut Oct 30, 2025 (<u>Issuewire.com</u>) - Nineteen-year-old Anna Beresford, a college sophomore, published author, and mental health advocate, has been named the winner of the prestigious Inner Light Writing Scholarship—an exclusive, invite-only national competition that honors exceptional young writers with extraordinary heart.

The scholarship is extended only to a small, hand-selected group of young writers each year, and applicants must be nominated to receive an invitation. Anna was nominated following the release of her second book, a deeply personal collection of essays and poems that caught the attention of the selection committee.

Anna's award-winning essay, "I Want You to Know, I'm a Mirrorball," earned her the top prize of \$10,000. Inspired to use the moment to create even more impact, she chose to donate the entire award to support mental health research and domestic violence prevention efforts—two causes close to her heart. Judges were deeply moved by her emotional depth, authenticity, and compassion.

"From the moment I read Anna's essay, I knew she was someone extraordinary," said Karen Ellison, Executive Director of the Inner Light Scholarship Foundation. "Then I had the pleasure of speaking with her for an interview, and I couldn't be more confident in our decision. Anna is a true ray of light in a world that desperately needs more of it. Her optimism, compassion, and selflessness are who she is at her core. She's unstoppable—and she has a heart of gold."

Another finalist judge added:

"There's something undeniably special about her. She has a beautiful soul, and from the second she smiled, the entire room felt warmer. Her words, her presence, her kindness—it all feels genuine. I knew she was the winner the moment I read her work, but after speaking with her, I knew we made the right choice."

Anna's winning essay explores themes of vulnerability, healing, and self-worth. She reflects on the pressure she once felt to shrink herself to make others more comfortable—and how she's since learned that "we don't have to dim our light for others to shine. We can all shine: equally, beautifully, and in our own way."

When asked why she chose to donate her prize money, Anna replied,

"Because someone else needs it more. If we want to see change, we have to be willing to be the start of it."

Initially, Anna requested that her donation remain anonymous.

"I didn't want it to be about me," she explained. "God has given me more than enough, and I wanted to give back quietly."

After encouragement from the foundation, she agreed to share her story publicly in hopes of inspiring others to lead with kindness and purpose.

Anna is currently double majoring in early childhood education and journalism. She is a published author of two books, founder of Anna's Awareness Initiative (a mental health and kindness-based platform), and currently holds the title of Miss Connecticut United Crown of America, preparing to compete at nationals later this year.

She was named Miss Congeniality at the 2025 Miss Connecticut Teen USA competition and previously placed in the Top 5 at the 2023 state pageant.

As for what drives her, Anna says it's simple:

"I try to be extra kind to people because it might be the only kindness they've received that day," she shared. "You never know what someone's going through. A smile or a gentle word can make all the difference."

Through her writing, advocacy, and everyday actions, Anna Beresford continues to show that true leadership comes not from titles or trophies, but from character.

"She's the kind of person who makes you believe the world is still full of good," said Ellison. "Anna reminds us that you don't have to be loud to be heard. She proves that real beauty, real power, and real leadership come from within. We're honored to be part of her journey."

Read the full essay: expand the images to read full essay



T Ware You to Know, I're a Mirrorball*

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Source: Karen Ellison

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