

# Even top students can 'struggle'

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Engineers. Physicist/chemist and biomedical researcher.

Those are the career aspirations of this year's top grads from Stouffville District Secondary School.

All four students, who are graduating with grades ranging from 95.5 to 97.5 per cent, admitted despite their aptitude for math and science, achieving those marks wasn't always easy.

English was Cameron Nowikow's least favourite subject.

"I just find some of the things we learn not very useful. Just because of what I'm doing. Some of it's important. I get why we do it," the 18-year-old future engineer said.

Natalie Leung, 17, who graduated at the top of the class (97.5), didn't think she would like English but by the end, she did.

"Teachers are there to teach but they're also there to help," Leung said.

Leung will also be going into engineering.

Nowikow and Laura Monk also tied with the third-highest grades (95.5) while juggling sports and work.

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Nowikow played hockey and worked, Monk also played hockey, as well as rugby and took guitar and drum lessons. She tutored and babysat, as well.

Monk was one of three students to earn the Home-stead Award, which is given to students who contributed to the highest level of athletic involvement, student leadership and organization in the school's athletic council.

She'll be heading to Queen's University to study kinesiology with the ambition of becoming a biomedical researcher.

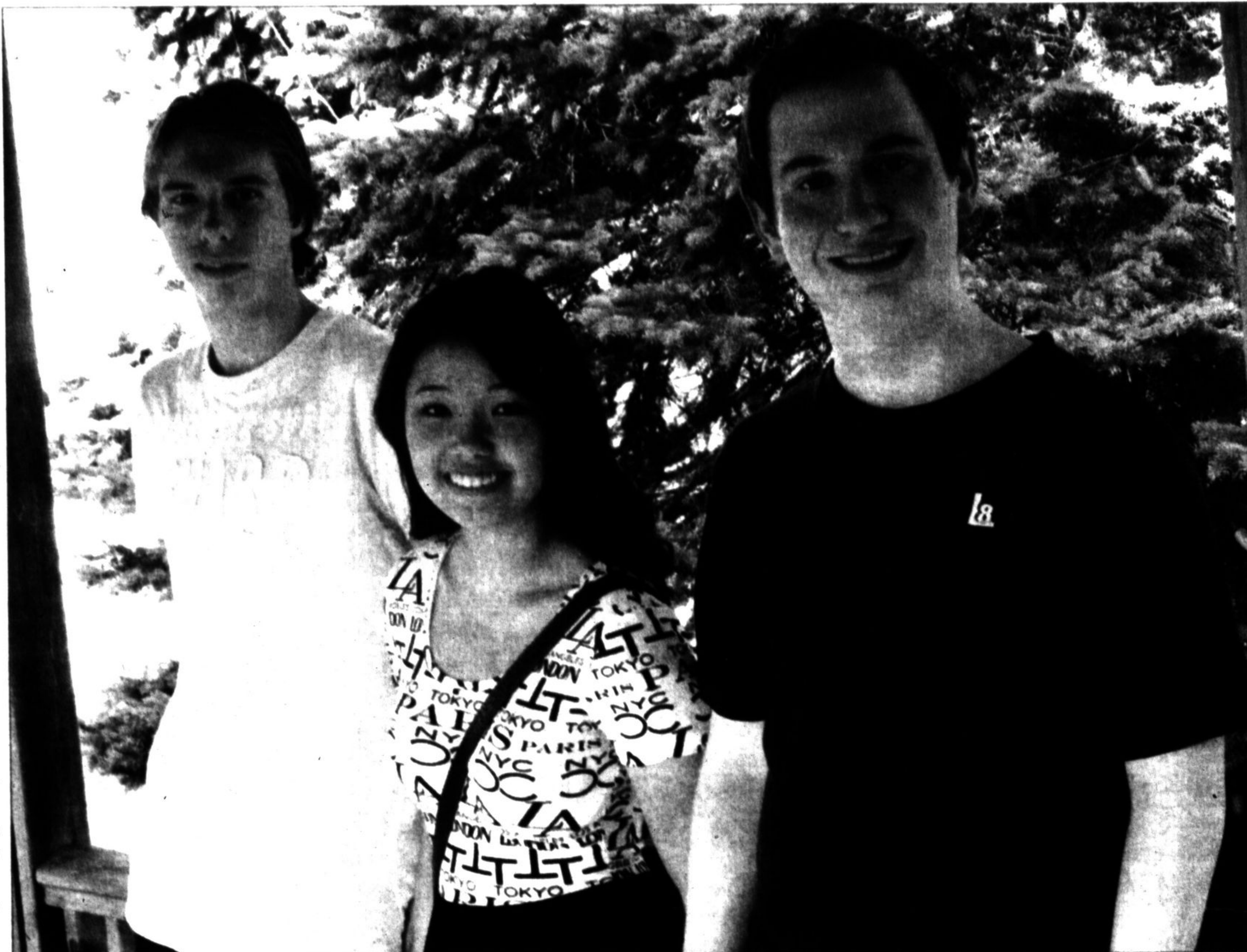
"I don't get stressed out about marks because I do pretty decently. I wanted to push myself a little bit," the 18-year-old said.

"I know I'm naturally bright. I understand things quickly people normally don't," Monk said, noting she graduated from the gifted program in elementary school.

Gavin Masterson, who graduated second in his class with a 97-per-cent average, will head to University of Toronto's Scarborough campus to study physical and environmental sciences. He plans on being a physicist or chemist.

Masterson hoped to finish the year with one award. He received three – the Robert Mole Award, the York Region District School Board Proficiency Award and the Scotiabank math award.

After taking a full course load all through high school, Masterson's only summer plan is to learn how to drive, because it's "useful".



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Cameron Nowikow (from left), Natalie Leung and Gavin Masterson finished in the top four of graduates from Stouffville District Secondary School this year.



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Laura Monk  
Queen's-bound athlete, musician and scholar from Stouffville District Secondary School

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