

The next candidate to be inducted has the middle name of Cassandra. I did not know that until I saw it listed for the NHS. I was struck by the beauty of the name, so decided to read up on it. The mythical Cassandra was said to have had “blue eyes, and is portrayed as intelligent, charming, elegant, friendly, and gentle.” I know this is true, not because I learned it on Wikipedia, but because I know Dianka Cassandra Moczula. She is all of those things listed, starting with the blue eyes. She has a piercing gaze that reflects her intelligence, seeming to penetrate mysteries of ideas and being. What strikes me even more, however, is the depiction of the mythical Cassandra as charming, friendly, and gentle. Dianka Cassandra embodies those qualities as well; it is no surprise, that when my AP Language students were creating our classroom equivalent of “a good family,” based upon an essay we read, that Dianka was the first person named, as the “welcomer.” She has openness and warmth that can turn a classroom into a home. These qualities are reflected in her daily actions, such as being the first to volunteer for a bake sale or classroom party, as well as her activities, including International Weekend, where she welcomes students from around the world, to peer leadership, serving as a role model for younger Verona students. Additionally, she is very involved with the Ukranian Girl Scouts and GLI—clearly Dianka has a sense of her place in a global community, and will find a way to make an impact on others. Her physical prowess may be seen in her throwing for the VHS track team, but her strength of character surpasses even that, as she shows commitment to causes that matter to her, all the while managing a challenging academic load and commitment to band as well.

While the mythical Cassandra faced the challenge of having her prophecies disbelieved, I see no such fate for our Dianka Cassandra. She will be a force to be reckoned with—possessing power greater than the gift of prophecy: grace, intelligence, and integrity. I am honored to welcome our welcomer, Dianka Cassandra Moczula, into the National Honor Society.