

Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship 2015

Background

Good evening everyone. My name is Paul Nelson and this is my daughter Whitney and we are here tonight to acknowledge the recipients of the third annual Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship. It gives our scholarship board, my family and I great satisfaction to present scholarship money this evening to two well-deserving seniors in memory of my wife Lisa.

For those of you who do not know, Lisa was a P.E. teacher and the head volleyball coach here at Ralston Valley for thirteen years. She passed away on March 3rd 2013 after battling cervical cancer for two years.

To commemorate her life and to ensure that she continues to touch the lives of kids, the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship was established. The fund got its start when our family requested contributions in lieu of flowers at Lisa's services in 2013 and the students, faculty, staff and parents here at Ralston Valley have done the rest.

The collective efforts of so many people in the RV community and surrounding businesses have made this fund a reality. So many have helped to establish and maintain the fund through generous contributions and by attending annual fundraising events. Our board, my family and I thank you for your support. I want to extend a special thank you to Mrs. Braketa and the members of Stugo who annually organize and run the "Lisa Nelson Mustang Stampede" a school sponsored 5K that directly benefits the scholarship fund. Thank you Stugo for all of your efforts!!

In addition to the 5K, this spring our board also ran a silent auction and because of the success of these two events we are pleased to announce that each recipient this evening will be receiving a \$1500.00 scholarship. This year we had more applications than ever. Selecting two recipients was not an easy task; as you can imagine there are some amazing student athletes in this building. Narrowing it down was very difficult due to the quality of the applications. Thank you to all of those that applied and to the teachers and staff that assisted them.

Both of tonight's recipients possess qualities respected by Coach Nelson. They are tremendous students, have experienced athletic achievement and have demonstrated leadership, good character, citizenship, sportsmanship and community involvement.

Evan Gustafson

Our male recipient will be attending the University of Colorado Boulder this fall. He is a National Honor Society member carrying a 3.89 GPA. He has been a part of the Quill and Scroll International Honorary Society for High School Journalists as the Chapter President, the National Art Honor Society as the Chapter Secretary, The Review as the Editor of Photography and Design and the Editor in Chief and the Express Newspaper as the Head Photojournalist. He is also a member of DRIVEN Leadership.

Athletically, he has participated in Cross Country and Track & Field. He was named Cross Country team captain in 2013 and 2014. He overcame an injury this season during Cross Country and upon his return to the team he posted a personal best time of 17:49 in the 5K. During his time at RV, he did an excellent job balancing athletics with the classroom receiving an academic letter each year.

He has been active in the community accumulating over 400 hours of community service since the beginning of his junior year. He has donated his time to West Woods Elementary as an outdoor lab leader and to the Arvada Covenant Church as the Director of Student Media and as member of a mission trip that went to Los Angeles in 2012. He has also served the community as a member of the Boy Scouts of America from 2008-2014. In 2012, he earned the highest rank in scouting a Silver Palm for his continued service and achievement. He is presently a member of the National Eagle Scout Association. In addition, last year he was presented The Congressional Award by Ed Perlmutter for achievement in volunteer public service, personal development, physical fitness and expedition/exploration.

I am proud to introduce Evan Gustafson (Guh-STAHF-suhn) as the male recipient of the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship.

Madison Bader

Our female recipient will be attending the University of Wyoming in the fall, where she will be studying pre-pharmacy as a member of the University of Wyoming Honors Program. She is a National Honor Society member carrying a 3.97 GPA. She has also served as a member of RV's Student Government and as a member of DRIVEN Leadership.

Athletically, she is a four-year participant of Girls Swimming and Track. She also played Volleyball for three years and ran Cross County for this first time this past fall-which she jokingly described as a “self induced form of torture”. One of her athletic goals coming into RV was to receive the Three Sport Athlete Award, which she received this evening. Her peers, being named team captain in both volleyball and swimming, view her as a leader. She has done an amazing job balancing the demands of being an athlete with the demands of being a student; she has received an academic letter each year, been a four time recipient of the Outstanding Academic Athlete Award and has been named to the Academic All State First Team three times.

In her time here at RV, she has also been active in the community compiling over 250 hours of community service. She has volunteered numerous hours for the “youth” of our community assisting with programs such as Outdoor Lab and events such as the West Woods Elementary Book Fair and the Scott Elementary Carnival. In addition, she has coached youth volleyball for the YMCA, for the RV Gold Crown program and for the annual mini-mustangs volleyball camp. She has also found time to assist the Habitat for Humanity, the VFW where she aided their efforts to place flags on the graves of fallen soldiers and the Arvada Covenant Church where she helped assemble Packs of Hope for children entering foster care.

I am proud to introduce Madison Bader as the female recipient of the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship.