

Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship-2023

Background

Good evening. My name is Paul Nelson, and this is my daughter Whitney. We are excited to acknowledge the recipients of the eleventh annual Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship here on "Lisa Nelson Court". It gives us great pleasure to introduce the male and female recipients who will each receive a \$5000.00 college scholarship in honor and memory of Coach Nelson.

For those who are not familiar with Coach Nelson, she was a P.E. teacher and the head volleyball coach here at Ralston Valley from 2000-2013. She truly loved her position as an educator and a coach and she genuinely and deeply cared for her students, her athletes, and her colleagues. Tragically on March 3, 2013, she passed away after a courageous battle with cervical cancer. She was 43. She never let cancer compromise her way. She battled cancer with dignity, strength and courage. She touched many lives here at RV during her 13-year tenure as a teacher and a coach.

To commemorate her life and to ensure that she continues to influence the lives of Ralston Valley students the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship was established. Since its inception in 2013, Ralston Valley students, faculty and staff in conjunction with the surrounding community and many generous sponsors

have contributed to ensure the stability and longevity of the fund.

So many people have helped the fund grow by participating in our annual fundraising events. I want to extend a special thank you to Mrs. Braketa and the members of Student Government who annually organize and run the "Lisa Nelson Mustang Stampede" an annual 5K that directly benefits the scholarship fund. I also want to thank all students, parents, teachers and staff members who participated in last fall's 5K.

Together we have created a scholarship we can be proud of. Together we are fulfilling the mission of the scholarship board, which reads...**We want to remember and honor Lisa's legacy and Pay It Forward...** through college scholarships for Ralston Valley High School Student Athletes.

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.

Augden Tacha

Academics

Our female recipient will be attending the University of Northern Colorado in the fall. She has been accepted into the school's nursing program and will high jump on their track team. She is a National Honor Society Member carrying a 3.7 weighted GPA. During her junior and senior years, she received Academic All-State honors as a member of the volleyball team. Through Warren Tech, she is a member of the Career and Technical Student Organization and the National Technical Honor Society. In the summer of 2022, she traveled to Berlin for the Global Leadership Summit. She was part of a team of students from around the world that received recognition for a prototype they developed that addressed a real-world health problem. Their prototype is currently on display in the Nobel Prize Museum, in Stockholm, Sweden.

Athletics

Athletically our female recipient is a two-sport varsity athlete in volleyball and track. She is a two-year letter winner in volleyball, a four-year letter winner in track and received second team all-conference honors in track her junior year. She has also participated in club volleyball and club track where she finished 3rd in the high jump at the New Balance Indoor Nationals. In her essay to scholarship committee, she explains what she has learned through her athletic

experiences. She writes, "Sports gave me a sense of family, team, inclusion, and support that I carried throughout high school. She goes on to say, "Competition is not always about winning or losing, but about the dedication to your team and to yourself to always working hard to get better. It's about taking these lessons learned on the court and using them to excel in life". Anyone who knows this young lady can testify to the amazing person she is and the way she treats others. In a letter of recommendation to the scholarship committee, Coach Ahlman, describes her as a phenomenal athlete and one of the most kind and caring teammates she had ever seen in her time at Ralston Valley High School.

Community

Our female recipient excels in community service. The first semester of this school year she served as an Outdoor Lab high school leader, where she mentored 6th grade Jefferson County students. While serving as CTSO President at Warren Tech she organized a Murder Mystery fundraiser breakfast that benefited the Marshall Fire victims. Also at Warren Tech, she organized a bake sale for the residents of Golden Pond Retirement Community. Through a give back challenge at her volleyball club, she organized the making and distributing of blessing bags for the homeless during the COVID shut down. She has packed food boxes for the homeless at the Food Bank of the Rockies, served meals at the FOCO Café in Fort Collins, helped with office organization at the Family Tree Roots of Courage Safe Clinic and volunteered to help with the Lisa Nelson Mustang Stampede.

For academic achievement, for being a tremendous athlete and teammate, and for selfless service to the community, I am proud to introduce Augden Tacha as the female recipient of the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship.

Academics

Our male recipient will be attending the University of Nevada Las Vegas in the fall. He is a National Honor Society Member carrying a 3.8 weighted GPA. He is an Academic Letter Winner and has received Academic All-State honors. Before his senior year he applied to Student Government and was unanimously selected to be part of their leadership group. Mrs Braketa writes in her letter of recommendation, "In my 17 years of running Ralston Valley's Leadership Program, I have never been so impressed by a student leader in such a short amount of time."

Athletics

Athletically, our male recipient is a four-year varsity lacrosse player and was named team captain his senior year. In his essay to the scholarship committee, he reflects on his experience as a student athlete. He writes, "Being a student athlete has taught me that nothing in life is given, everything is earned. He goes on to say, "High school sports have equipped me with the skills necessary for success in any field, they have shaped me into a person who cares for others."

Community

Our male recipient has been active in the community. He regularly participates in the Cameron Holland Street Cleanup. He is a leader in Ralston Valley's Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He was a participant in the Ralston Valley Lacrosse Food Drive that brought in over 2,000 nonperishable food items for the food bank at Arvada High School. He has also volunteered his time at local food banks helping with the restocking and distribution of food packages. He stated that his most proud act of community service came this school year, when he raised over 2,000 during the Ralston Valley Make A Wish week in the name of Sawyer.

For academic achievement, for positive leadership, for being a tremendous athlete, and for being active in the community, I am proud to introduce Joseph Snyder as the male recipient of the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship.