

## Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship-2022

### Background

Good evening. My name is Paul Nelson, and this is my daughter Whitney. We are excited to acknowledge the recipients of the tenth 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 \$2500.00 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 Ryan Stadler and 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.

## **Gabrielle Miller**

### ***Academics***

Hello, I am Whitney, Lisa Nelson's daughter and I am going to announce this year's female recipient.

Our female recipient will be attending Texas A&M in the fall. She is a member of the National Honor Society carrying a 4.6 weighted GPA. She is president of Ralston Valleys' premed club. Last fall, she applied for and was accepted into Texas A&M's Engineering to Medicine program. She was one of only five high school seniors across the nation selected for this opportunity. The program will allow her to pursue an undergraduate degree in engineering and it includes direct acceptance into their medical school. The program is aimed at creating doctors of tomorrow "physicianeers" who take engineering and apply it to the medical field.

### ***Athletics***

Athletically our female recipient is a four sport varsity athlete in Gymnastics, Dive, Golf and Track. During her freshman year of gymnastics she suffered an ankle injury in the postseason that required surgery. To her credit she persevered through that adversity! As a freshman and sophomore she was part of a Pomona gymnastics program that won a history-making five straight state championships. She has served as a team captain both in Dive and Gymnastics. As a gymnast she has received all conference and MVP honors. In her essay to our scholarship committee, she explains what she has learned through her athletic experiences. She writes "being a four-sport varsity athlete has molded me into who I am today, a very high-performing and competitive person. I have always pushed myself to be the best version of me every single day. From working incredibly hard in practice, to studying for a difficult test, sports have never been an easy road, as I have faced injuries and setbacks. She goes on to say, "I will take these learnings in perseverance, grit, and determination to never give up and to always find a way to reach the finish line no matter my pursuit!

### ***Community***

Our female recipient excels in the area of community service. She founded her own organization called Global Equipment Mission. Her organization collects used sports and medical equipment and redistributes it to underprivileged communities and individuals who need it most. Through her efforts she has redistributed 500+ sports and medical related items to support children in golf, gymnastics, hockey, football and softball. She has also been active in community service through coaching gymnastics at the Apex Center, volunteering at Santa House in Arvada who support families by providing free gifts for underprivileged children at Christmas, and by volunteering at Blue Sky Bridge, an organization she joined to support abuse prevention. She is passionate about helping others and has been recognized by being awarded the Prudential Spirit of Community Award as well as a Volunteer Service Award from President Biden.

Our female recipient is an outstanding scholar, a four-sport athlete, and a tremendous servant leader. Mrs Braketa describes her as “one of Ralston Valley’s best”! I am proud to introduce Gabrielle Miller as the female recipient of the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship.

## **Lane Kellogg**

### ***Academics***

Our male recipient will be attending the College of Wooster this fall where he will be majoring in Biology/Premed and playing lacrosse. He is a National Honor Society member carrying a 4.1 weighted GPA.

### ***Athletics***

Our male recipient has not had a typical high school experience. During his time here at RV he has gone through some adversity to say the least. Let me tell you about his amazing athletic journey.

As a freshman he made the varsity lacrosse team. Prior to his sophomore year he broke his hip and lost football. In the spring of his sophomore year COVID struck and he lost lacrosse. At the start of his junior year, tragedy struck, and he lost his mom.

As you can see, his journey was marked by a series of losses, but he didn't let anger or sadness consume him. Instead, he drew strength from those experiences and has leaned on what his mom taught him and that was to value the little things in life.

Armed with this wonderful way of looking at his circumstances, he played lacrosse his junior year and had an epic season! He set a single game point record and a single season scoring record. He was named team captain and received all conference as well as all state honors. He explained that he did it for his mom who taught him that there are a million little things in life that can be celebrated! His lacrosse coach said it best, “He is someone who can be counted on to be fully in and to give his best regardless of circumstance.”

Adversity struck once again his senior year. He played football but his season came to an end just short of the playoffs due to tearing his ACL. Once again, he experienced a setback, he had lost football and another season of lacrosse and once again, he handled his circumstances with maturity by celebrating the little things that were right in his life instead of focusing on what was wrong.

He summed it up best when he said, “High school sports taught me how to persevere, how to have confidence in being who I am, and how to celebrate the little things in life, when it seems like there is nothing good to celebrate at all.”

### ***Community***

Our male recipient has been active in the community. As a national honor society member, he has participated in things like street cleanups and food drives. He has been involved with make

a wish, trick or treat street, the Mr. Mustang contest and has assisted with sports introduction night for incoming freshmen. He has volunteered for a non-profit named Origins where he has strung lacrosse sticks and acquired lacrosse gear for kids who can't afford it. He has also served as a volunteer coach for the Storm Youth Lacrosse Program.

For academic achievement, for athletic perseverance, for community service and for teaching all of us how to look at our circumstances in a positive way, I am proud to introduce Lane Kellogg as the male recipient of the Lisa Nelson Memorial Scholarship.