

Initial Essay

Relationship to Nominee: Father

My son Grant may have some impressive accomplishments under his belt, but he's most deserving because of his uncompromising value system. Not only is he academically supreme and a member of National Honor Society, he's recently attained Eagle Scout status, the highest level possible. Blessed with a cheerful countenance and a burning desire to help others, he's a devout Christian and a pastor's aide who loves teaching, tutoring and mentoring other scouts. Whether it's participating in Order of the Arrow, coaching kids to earn merit badges, volunteering at a car wash, organizing food drives, assisting with worship services, leading a blood drive, working in a soup kitchen, devising reading programs for educational outreach or conducting various fund-raisers for his troop, Grant truly lives the Scout Oath and Motto. His passion for service extends to other organizations as well, such as Habitat for Humanity, Breakfast with Santa and Coats for Kids. Grant is also an especially empathetic listener as a result of his parents divorcing years ago. Such an event would be insurmountable for many, but Grant's forgiveness and understanding allows him to wisely counsel other students who may be facing similar circumstances. He is keen to aid his peer group and those suffering from adversity. He lends a kind and caring ear to students enduring the pain of a divided family and offers uniquely cogent advice, praying for them regularly. Not only does he have a heart for people, but Grant's work ethic is incredible. For the past three years he's held a number of part-time jobs to save for college, but last summer, he surpassed all expectations by working at an auto repair shop weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., then grabbing a bite and dashing off to his next job as a movie theatre usher from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. In fact, his theatre manager was so delighted with Grant's efforts that he hand-picked my son to be the sole employee on those busy Friday night shifts. As a result of Grant's outstanding academic achievement, he was exclusively invited to join the prestigious National Society of High School Scholars, and twice, his principal selected him as one of only two students qualified to serve at a Christian Leadership conference hosted by Valparaiso University. Already a member of Honor Thespians at his high school with additional credits in professional theatre elsewhere in the community, Grant's recently been accepted into performing arts programs both at Millikin and Ball State University. His enormous talent, coupled with his commitment to excellence, will serve him well at either college. Ultimately, though, it's his strong moral compass and unassailable character which makes him such an extraordinAIRy young man.

Supporting Essay

Grant is easy to talk about, he is an exceptional young man. I am Grant's Scoutmaster and watched him grow from a young Boy Scout into a fine Eagle Scout. A young man's character must be unblemished to become an Eagle Scout. Only about 2% of all boys entering scouting ever make it to Eagle. The trail to Eagle is long steep and difficult. Not only must a boy earn all the necessary badges, but he must show character in leadership by mentoring young scouts and by preparing, organizing and leading an Eagle Scout Project of worth. Grant did all these things with grace and pride while demonstrating his natural abilities as a leader. Grant was also active in his church and school and is a credit to his scout troop, school, church and family. Grant is highly respected as an Eagle Scout, he lives the "Oath and Law". Grant is a "Treasure to our future and I feel honored to have been a part of his life."

Supporting Essay

Ask high school teachers who the student leaders are in their schools and some will point you to the star athletes, some will point you to the academic elites, and some will point you to the socialites. While all of those roles are leaders, my student leader this year conforms to no traditional mold. Grant Russel is the kind of student every teacher feels fortunate to teach. Grant rises above his classmates because of his maturity and wisdom that extends beyond his 18 years. He is cordial and respectful to teachers and students alike and, in turn, is respected by all. He does not know a stranger, his friendship base extends across grade levels and social groups. Grant is that prototypical positive influence in the classroom that every teacher enjoys, that friendly face that puts everyone at ease, that helpful voice that speaks up during class activities. Grant's largest talents lie in his acting and singing. As a stage performer, Grant is gifted and comes by it honestly (being the son of a professional actor here in Indianapolis). His performances over the past four years on our stage have been a large part of the resurgence in our school's drama department. We are thankful for him and hate to see him go in just a few more weeks. Grant's character and talents strengths are matched by his academic efforts. I've only had Grant in class this past year, but have seen in him a desire, a curiosity, a sincerity and a work ethic permeate his written work. While others are succumbing to a terminal case of senioritis, Grant is clearly hitting a higher gear as college is just around the corner. Is Grant Russel Extraordinary? Without a doubt. Thanks for considering him.

... Grant is loyal and dependable. He is definitely one that can be counted on. He is always willing to lend a hand and help out with any job that needs done in the front office here at school. This includes changing the letters on our sign in the middle of winter! He is also an extremely patient and intuitive young man. He is the "go to" guy for advice and counsel. He is trusted by his friends and teachers alike. You would be hard pressed to find someone to say a negative word about him.

He is a very talented on stage as well. He has participated in several productions here at Lutheran High School, as well as many performances on many different community stages. He is always a pleasure to watch and is pursuing this as a college major. I know that he will be very successful at this dream of his! He also uses these talents to participate in his church's praise band and Lutheran's Chamber Choir.

Grant has also done several service projects here at Lutheran and several other places. He has participated in our Habitat for Humanity, our school's blood drive, and Kristi's Games (our annual fundraiser). He was included in the group of students who organized a fundraiser for our custodian and his family during the loss of their grandchild. Outside of school, Grant has landscaped and refurbished an inner city playground as his final project in becoming an Eagle Scout.

As stated earlier, you could not find a better representative for this scholarship than Grant. He has not only been a student of mine, but I would like to say that he is my friend. As guidance counselor, some days are very stressful and hectic...Grant has often been there with a smile, a compliment and just plain niceness! Grant has made my day on several occasions. I know that he is anxious and exciting about attending Ball State next year, yet he will be missed VERY much here! ...

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Acting is something that takes perseverance and teaches one about rejection. Grant has never been one to feel sorry for himself. He is a person who can be humble while being in the spotlight (something indeed rare these days). He is a team player and takes time out of his own schedule to help fellow cast members improve in various areas, whether it be acting or dancing. He takes any character he is playing and puts everything he has into it, whether it is a small or large role. Not only is Grant a gifted actor, but a very good student. He has talent that will help him achieve, but a personality that will not forget his roots and those who have helped him to get where he is. - Principal of Lutheran High School
