

Kelly Szczepanski , 2014 Brian LaViolette Scholarship Recipient

Did you first learn about the Brian LaViolette Foundation when applying for the scholarship?

I learned about the Brian LaViolette Foundation through the scholarship application process. However, once I started talking to family and friends about applying and receiving the scholarship, I found that many of them knew of the LaViolette Family and their foundation. Hearing their perspectives helped me further understand the importance and honor of this award.

How did you learn you had won? What did it mean to you to win the scholarship?

Following my interview, I was told that I was one of two finalists and was invited to a ceremony at the Meyer Theatre in Green Bay. My principal, guidance counselor, and loved ones were all invited to the event.

After an introduction of the award, Doug LaViolette read the following statement from my application essay, "In my lifetime I strive to make a lasting impression on the people I encounter, every action helps, a smile, a conversation, a donation of time or money, all will make a difference in at least one life." As he read I slowly realized that he was reading my essay and that I was the recipient.

With tears of joy streaming down my face, I made my way up to the stage and gave the LaViolette family a hug. Receiving this scholarship was an honor. I am able to carry out Brian's legacy and spread his message throughout the community. It is also a constant reminder that someone believes in me and my ability to pursue my dreams.



What school are you attending with the help of the scholarship? What are you studying?

I am attending UW Oshkosh to pursue a major in nursing and minor in Spanish. I was able to complete my Spanish minor in the summer of 2016 by studying abroad in Salamanca,



Spain for 5 weeks. I will be graduating in December 2017 and may continue on to graduate school to become a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) shortly after.

How do you think Brian’s Story has changed your life or the lives of others?

Brian's story is a constant inspiration to live life to the fullest and enjoy the little moments in life. It is also a reminder that good can come from tragedy. The LaViolettes turned Brian's passing into a way to honor, celebrate, and assist others. This encourages me to make a difference in the lives of those around me.