

Rose Scannell, mother of Ben Edinger who is honored with a scholarship at Green Bay West High School

Had you heard of the Brian LaViolette Foundation before you were approached about a scholarship in honor of your son, Ben?

I had not heard of the Brian LaViolette Foundation before Ben died. After Ben died, Brian's parents, Renee and Doug, contacted my husband Randy and I. Many people from the community contacted us after Ben was killed in the Iraq War, and their support and thoughtfulness was very comforting to us.

When we were asked about having a scholarship in Ben's name through the LaViolette Foundation, we were so pleased. We had thought that we would have a one-time scholarship at Green Bay West High School, using money we received after Ben's funeral. Through the LaViolette Foundation, we are able to give away a scholarship every year, forever.

Donations came from Ben's funeral, and from friends and family and community members who have continued to donate throughout the years. But we also have funds donated by community groups and community members that were raised through the hard work of the LaViolette Foundation and the LaViolette family. We have been able to do so much more with the help of the LaViolette Foundation.



How has this scholarship helped you and your family with the loss of Ben?

Through this scholarship, we feel comforted knowing that Ben will be remembered, always. Long after his family and friends are gone; when the children of Ben's friends only know of him through funny and sad stories whispered by their parents feeling nostalgic; people will continue saying Ben's name in an auditorium, in a thank you card, in an expression of gratitude and happiness.

We will always feel the loss of Ben. But we can see that he is not forgotten, and that is so positive.

Knowing that this scholarship, in Ben's name, has a positive effect on the world also buoys us. The students who receive it will grow and impact others. The people who receive the Sgt. Benjamin Edinger Scholarship of Honor are people who are going into service professions. Goodness will ripple from this in ways that we will never be able to see, but the world will be able to feel.



Rose with recipient, Nikita Konkell

You are involved with the selection and presentation of the scholarship. How do you think it impacts the student? The school? You?

I'm on the committee that selects the scholarship recipient, along with two other of Ben's relatives. My husband Randy and I present the scholarship at West High School. When I make the presentation, I tell a little about Ben, and our family, and the LaViolette Foundation. I think it has real meaning for the students.



Rose with recipient, Shaina Dodson

They know that the person who is reading their application is someone who really cares. I'm always so happy to give out the scholarship. It's fun and rewarding to see the person who I feel I've come to know a little from the application essay. The school values the contribution of the scholarship, and I get the sense that it has real meaning for the school to connect the current students with the past.

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

My husband and I have been affected very personally. Because of the Brian LaViolette Foundation, we have this ongoing connection between our child and the community. And we have the opportunity to tell others about Ben's story. That's so valuable to us; it is really beyond measure.

Also, the lives of so many students are changed. The recipients of the Sgt. Benjamin Edinger Scholarship of Honor, and the many recipients over the years of the many scholarships from the LaViolette Foundation, are all affected. The scholarship gives the students great opportunities for learning and to make contributions to the world. **The past becomes connected to the future, and changes it. For the better.**



Randy and Rose Scannell