Dear Petitte Scholarship Fund Applicant:

We want to provide you with a little bit of background on the Ryan & Collin Petitte Memorial Scholarship Fund. In doing so, we hope to give you a better understanding of why we organized this scholarship and why we hope you will take the time to apply.

Ryan Petitte graduated from Ukiah High School in 1990; his younger brother Collin in 1997. Ryan and Collin moved to Ukiah with their parents from the state of Hawaii in the summer of 1988, prior to his sophomore year. My twin brother and I first met Ryan on the football field, when he spotted the junior varsity team practicing and raced over with his cleats in hand from his house across the street on Despina. The start of an everlasting friendship.

Ryan died unexpectedly from an extremely rare genetic disorder in November of 2003. His death was preceded by his younger brother Collin's more than a year prior from the same condition. I could spend pages describing them both to you. Let it be enough to say they are greatly missed and loved by family and friends alike.

In the year following Collin's death, Ryan and I talked about his intention to start up a scholarship in his brother's name. He didn't describe the specifics, but made it clear he wanted to pay tribute to his sibling and keep his memory alive. After Ryan's passing, it became my own goal to see the scholarship realized.

Annually, we raise money for the scholarship with the Ryan Petitte Capital Adventure Challenge. Now in its sixth year (it started in 2002 before Ryan passed away), the Capital Adventure Challenge is a two-day, fourteen-stage, loosely "athletic" competition organized with a small group of friends. The competition is held every Columbus Day Weekend in Washington, DC, and the nearby Shenandoah Valley. With about a dozen or more competitors a year, the event is modeled after the Tour de France, with a series of individual stages, a yellow jersey designating the overall leader from stage-to-stage, and a coveted Adventure Challenge Cup trophy awarded to the winner. Stages can vary year-to-year but generally include a kayak, mountain bike, trail run, free throw contest, bowling, darts, trivia, a field goal kick, and horseshoes. To raise money for the fund, competitors reach out to their broader network of friends and colleagues. We may plan additional fundraising events in the future (stay tuned) but at this point that's it. It's about remembrance, friendship, and fun. Both Ryan and Collin loved the outdoors. Collin was an avid mountain biker; Ryan a strong runner.

A small committee made up of close friends and family of Ryan and Collin will review all applications and decide on a yearly scholarship recipient. Adventure Challenge competitors as a group will also get two collective votes each year (out of ten).

It's worth noting that we've not set stone-carved requirements for the award. It's not limited to 4.0 scholars, star athletes or students with the highest club memberships. We've tried to capture a few ideas for representing some of the interests and ideals of both Ryan and Collin but otherwise purposely left it open for some interpretation.

It's our hope that the scholarship will serve as a modest tribute and remembrance to these two closest of brothers. We believe each winner will in some way positively represent Ryan and Collin's memory. Thank you for taking the time to read this. We hope you will apply.

Sincerely, Ben Milder, Founder