



PRESS RELEASE

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**First Pat Lund Memorial Scholarship Recipients: Reading Center alumni,
Ryan Jirik and Hannah Higgins**

(May 30, 2023, Rochester, MN)

The Reading Center Board of Directors is pleased to announce the recipients of the inaugural Pat Lund Memorial Scholarship awards to Hannah Higgins and Ryan Jirik.

Awards will be presented on May 31, 2023 at 6 p.m. by Judge Kevin Lund at The Reading Center Board of Directors Meeting.

About the Awardees: Ryan Jirik

Ryan Jirik is soon to be graduate of John Marshall High School in Rochester. He will begin studies in Physical Education and Health at North Dakota State University this fall. Ryan says, “having ADHD has taught me that my mental health is directly influenced by my level of physical health and physical activity. Getting out and getting moving is not only good for my body, it is also good for my brain.”

Ryan was involved in The Reading Center’s programming for 7 years. He has developed a positive attitude about his dyslexia saying, “Academics are not easy for everyone, education does not come easy to everyone, but everyone is good at something.”

Ryan is an Eagle Scout and The Reading Center was the benefactor of his skills when he planned, fundraised and built our 8ft. x 10ft. yard shed to store The Reading Center’s outdoor equipment.

About the Awardees: Hannah Higgins

Originally from Byron, Hannah Higgins will enter her senior year this fall at University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point where she is studying Wildlife Education. Hannah

submitted an engaging video with her scholarship application showcasing her communication and storytelling skills.

Hannah's love and passion for animals started at a young age. Growing up she cared for many pets and ended her high school career as an intern with Oxbow Park and Hollman Zoo. Following her completion of college, Hannah plans to work in the national resources area with the goal to "inspire other people to protect our natural world and find beauty in our wildlife." Hannah is a Dean's list student.

Hannah reflects that her elementary years were "super frustrating" academically and her parents found they needed outside help. In 3rd grade Hannah began tutoring with The Reading Center which she describes as a "turning point in my life". She spent 4 years participating in The Reading Center's classes and 1:1 tutoring. She says having dyslexia has taught her to "never give up no matter what or how big a challenge seemed," and that having a learning disability "makes me who I am."

About the Pat Lund Memorial Scholarship

Patrick "Pat" Lund (1963-2022) was a Reading Center alumnus who was a thirty-year fixture in the Southeastern MN sports reporting field. Most of his career was spent at KTTC-TV in Rochester. He had a legacy of mentoring younger television journalists and photojournalists and was the second inductee into the Tight End Hall of Fame in 2021. Despite being held back in 1st grade and struggling through high school and college, Pat persevered and worked in his dream career as a sports reporter. Pat didn't let his dyslexia stop him from achieving his goals.

The Lund family is celebrating Pat by helping others with dyslexia to reach their goals. The Lund family, in partnership with The Reading Center, has created an annual scholarship in his honor to help dyslexic students reach their post-secondary education goals.

This opportunity is annually open to The Reading Center alumni up to age 30 who are currently enrolled or have confirmed plans to continue their education through a university, technical school or other training program. Scholarship awards are for up to \$1,000 per year, will be paid directly to the school and are renewable for up to 4 years if studies are continued.



Hannah Higgins



Ryan Jirik

ABOUT THE READING CENTER

The Reading Center is a nationally recognized nonprofit that provides specialized educational services for children and adults experiencing difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling. We: (1) Provide diagnostic and educational services; (2) Train educators in the proven research-based technique based on the Orton-Gillingham approach; and (3) Increase public awareness and understanding of language learning disabilities. We have a growing number of partnerships that include nonprofits and charter schools in Rochester and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The Reading Center's main campus is in the NW corner of Rochester with a satellite office opening in Woodbury in Summer 2023.

During our 72 years of service, 15,000 children and 9,000 adults have benefited from the evidence-based, multi-sensory, phonetic approach grounded in the science of reading that is the hallmark of The Reading Center.

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