

## Congratulations 2024 Berlin Brats Scholarship Recipients



### **Robert McCuskey**

The Berlin Brats Scholarship Committee is pleased to present the combined Marianna (Lieurance) Mounsey Memorial Scholarship and Berlin Brats Scholarship award to Robert McCuskey, son of Samuel McCuskey, Class of 1971.

Bobby expressed that being a Berlin Brat is more than just an alumni group sharing experiences, it's a connection to a unique chapter of his family's history and a legacy of resilience, adaptability and camaraderie.

He witnessed the unity amongst Berliners firsthand during our last Berlin reunion in 2014, traveling outside of the United States for the first time ever, allowing him to truly appreciate the significance of being a Berlin Brat and shaping his own personal perspectives. His views circled around stories of geopolitical tensions between divided cities, under the watchful eye of East German and Soviet authorities and recounts his father memories of playing soccer with East Germans through carefully planned arrangements, emphasizing that indeed living in Berlin forged a rare community. A community strengthened by adaptability, resilience, teamwork and an openness to different cultures, all lessons he inherited and applies in his life today.

His passions are in giving back, helping and contributing to one's community. For his Eagle Scout project, he built stage platforms for a middle school drama program providing a safe and durable infrastructure to the benefit of many. He is involved in the local food pantry to help serve meals to those in need.

He is also dedicated to using his lacrosse skills as an Assistant Coach hoping to inspire the love of the game to other young athletes. This passion, in turn, is used as team community projects with small local inner-city schools for young students.

Bobby is currently enrolled in the Master's in Business Administration program at Concordia University Irvine and also holds a Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences with minors in Chemistry and Construction Management from the University of Denver. His drive is dedicated to excelling in the business and finance world while continuing to serve others.

Congratulations Bobby!



### **Alexander Rieper**

The Berlin Brats Scholarship Committee is pleased to present the combined Marianna (Lieurance) Mounsey Memorial Scholarship and Berlin Brats Scholarship award to Alexander Rieper, son of Tracy Fitton Rieper, Class of '90.

Alex is a military brat who, was "blessed to able to live in Southern Germany for four years." His mother was born in Berlin. He has visited his mother's childhood home and has toured Berlin American High School. He recounts many stories from his mom as a young girl living in Berlin during the Cold War. One of the most memorable; an East German waiter asking his grandparents if they would sneak him across the Wall, and his grandparents of course, having to deny such a request. As a military brat and the son of a Berlin Brat, he witnessed "Americans stationed overseas, who integrated the German culture.....to merge, blend and diversify what life as an American in the German culture can

represent". Firsthand, he experienced the perfect blending of the best of both cultures. Alex has served as: Chess Club President, HS Executive Leadership Council member, JROTC Squad Leader and JROTC Academic Crest recipient, and Boy Scouts of America Arrow of Light Badge.

Along with his youth group, he volunteers at the International Loan Closet of Ft. Leavenworth, a non-profit organization that provides free household items for 90 international students assigned to Ft. Leavenworth attending the U.S. Army Command Staff General College. Alex has been accepted early to Kansas State University, in the Exercise Science and Sports Rehabilitation program. He was also awarded an in-state scholarship for academic and ACT Merit Based Scoring. Along with his academic achievements, this applicant has overcome significant obstacles, all while demonstrating his fortitude, resilience and determination. He credits his mom with much of his perseverance. She often says, "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer is simple, "one bite at a time." Small steps lead to great gains and a journey of life and learning ahead, it all starts with putting one foot in front of the other. Congratulations Alex!



### **Kaitlyn "Katie" Shaw**

The Berlin Brats Scholarship Committee is pleased to present the combined Adam Hildenbrand Memorial Scholarship and Berlin Brats Scholarship award to Katie Shaw, daughter of two Berlin Brats, Tim Shaw and Jennie Hewitt Shaw, Class of 1985. Katie was accepted into the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia to study Business Administration with a focus on Marketing, with the intention of pursuing her Master of Science in Business Analytics.

In high school, Katie's volleyball coach praised her for keeping her grades high while excelling in sports, while being a motivator to other team members. A recipient of the prestigious Girl Scout Gold Award, she built two free Little Libraries in her community as her project, allowing everyone to share in the love for reading and exemplifying the noble calling of service to others. Katie "carefully selected strategic places for the libraries to make sure they were easily reachable for underserved families, children, and anyone who could benefit from a wide range of books. Every library had a diverse selection of genres to cater to various age groups and interests, promoting a passion for reading throughout the community."

As part of the Young Life program, a Christian organization bringing the good news of God's love in an environment where young people can trust they will be loved and accepted for who they are, she has been praised for her leadership abilities, and as a Wyldlife Leader, planned and led fun activities for children in a welcoming and safe space. Her definition of a Berlin Brat is one who lived in a divided city that bridged two worlds, creating a special bond to unify them, representing a unique intersection of history, culture, and personal growth. In a world filled with division, embodying the **spirit** of a Berlin Brat inspires unity, fosters connections, embraces diversity, and advocates understanding in a world that often needs it the most.

"Being a Berlin Brat is not just about my parents' history, but also about how their experiences have influenced my perspective. They educated me on the significance of empathy, comprehension, and being able to adjust to change. Their stories show me that...the connections we make can go beyond time and location."  
Congratulations Katie!



### **Parker Ashlyn Thompson**

The Berlin Brats Scholarship Committee is pleased to present the Berlin Brats Scholarship award to Parker Ashlyn Thompson, daughter of Nicole Clayton Hutchison, Class of 1992.

Being the child of a Berlin Brat has had a major impact on Parker's life. Friends that the student's mother made in the late 1980's have been a source of support. In the student's own words, "They are some of the first people I go to when I need help, or even just need someone to talk to about my day. They are some of the most incredibly supportive people, and their families have accepted my mom and I as a part of their own families. I know these women will be there for me and my mom no matter what, and I am so glad that my mom got to go to a school that gave her these two friends. Being a Berlin Brat means family and acceptance no matter where you are in the world."

Working in the community is a priority. In addition to helping with hurricane cleaning up and raising money for hurricane relief programs, Parker worked outside of the school day with students with special needs and other disabilities. To quote the student, "This was truly some of the most rewarding work that I got to do with students. After school we would play games, assist in homework, and help them learn life skills. It was so fulfilling to see the smile on their faces after we assisted them in these different tasks," Parker is an Elementary Education major at the school's College of Community Innovation and Education. A former high school teacher writes, "(This student) possesses the qualities that make for an outstanding teacher, compassion, patience and the natural ability to connect with others." and "she is on the path to becoming an amazing educator. Her passion for teaching, coupled with her strong academic foundation and leadership abilities, will undoubtedly inspire her future students." Congratulations Parker!