

Rain City Flyers Scholarship 2019 Recipients Announcement

The RCF Scholarship was established in 2013 by the cross country team parent group to recognize Jim Neff for his “. . . generosity and dedication to Rain City and our kids.” Since inception, the parents have collected funds which are designated for the Rain City Flyers Scholarship as an expression of thanks to Jim for his time, energy and effort for their children and for the hundreds of youth he has coached and guided to become responsible athlete/citizens of the world over his 29 years of coaching RCF. Over time the scholarship has grown to recognize all the many coaches, parents, athletes and others who have contributed to RCF.

The RCF Scholarship Committee is proud to announce the 2019 RCF scholarship recipients:

Harrison Fitch

As a Rain City Flyer Harrison was a model of true grit. He was a determined competitor and team leader, competing with the cross country team from 2009-2015. His first JO National competition was Birmingham AL in 2010, with several more to follow.

When Harrison entered high school at Roosevelt, he exchanged his racing spikes for football pads. He also carried forward from Rain City his skills of perseverance and dedication and his ethic to work his hardest when the going got tough. This allowed him to excel on the field where he matured into one of Roosevelt’s star players.

As he got older, Harrison realized that while sports were great, academics and community involvement were also important. He worked very hard for good grades, creating good scholarly habits to carry into college and the work place. And he gave back to his communities, as a camp counselor at the annual RHS youth football camp, and through projects such as park clean ups across the city.

Harrison will study business at the University of Washington. He has a set a plan for his future and without a doubt attributes parts of who he is and plans to be to the experiences he had running for the Rain City Flyers. He identified both coaches and all the parents who helped out as inspiring him and expresses his gratefulness with “Win Rain City”!

Anya Hirschfeld

It was as a Rain City Flyer Anya first realized her passion for running. As with her interest in many childhood activities, Anya followed the footsteps of an older sibling onto RCF. However, she soon realized running as something more meaningful for her.

Anya competed in JO cross country from 2009-2018. She achieved All American at the 2011 JO national cross country meet in Myrtle Beach SC and was a JO track All American in the 800 in 2015. She holds the RCF team 800 record for 13-14 girls at 2:15.13. While Anya was motivated by her successes at meets, she was inspired by the friendships, games, teamwork and having an outlet with Rain City where she could just be herself.

Anya is a true scholar/athlete. Academically she has maintained a near perfect GPA and is graduating 12th in her class at Ingraham, all while exceling athletically. She qualified for the State cross country meet all 4 years, with a high finish of 7th in 2018. She was a 4-time state meet qualifier in the 800 (2nd in 2019) and 3-time qualifier in the 1600 (3rd in 2019), with personal bests of 2:11.84 and 4:57.42, respectively.

After graduation Anya will attend Dartmouth College where she will run competitively. She has yet to decide if she will major in comparative literature or human geography. But she is committed to both academic achievement and continuing to improve on the track. Her scholarship application salutation expresses her RCF spirit she will carry forward: "To many more years of inspiring kids through running."

Dani Lockert

Rain City participation sparked a lifelong love of running for Dani. She came to her first RCF practice as a 6th grader who had been unsuccessful at sports. While she did not find immediate athletic success, she stuck with it and learned to work hard, focusing on cutting time off her own results rather than race place finishes. The slow but steady improvement she saw made running fun.

Participation at JO Nationals on the 11-12 Girls team in 2013 was transformative for Dani. First, making the team validated her hard work. Then, running against kids from all over the country was a lasting memory and inspired confidence. And because of team friendships strengthened by the shared Nationals experience running the next season was even more fun!

Dani took her RCF perseverance and work ethic to the Roosevelt HS Girls XC team and came to the season as the best freshman on the team. This marked the first time she was best at anything athletic and was a source of pride that gave her confidence in all aspects of life. As a high school runner Dani still didn't break school records, but she is proud of her own performances. She pushed at practice and focused on long term success and goals, striving for the next PR, but not needing instant gratification.

Dani notes that her 12-year-old self, one of the slowest runners on her RCF team, would be shocked to know that in high school she would be the cross country and track team captains and that she would receive a four-year letter plaque. She credits Rain City as a place for learning that hard work and dedication produce achievement and for showing her that running can be fun! She will take her love of running and dedication to the University of Washington come fall.

Lydia Montgomery

Lydia's start with Rain City as a fifth grader began with "stressful Saturdays." RCF cross country was her first experience with caring about competing and she experienced self-imposed pre-race nerves when she toed the line of a race. She wanted to succeed, as much for teammates' sake as her own.

Over time with Rain City Lydia learned the team didn't require any particular skill or talent—just commitment. So, she came to practice each day, ran every meet through regionals during her four years on the team, ate a lot of post-race Skittles and made many incredible friends. The nerves didn't abate, but her lasting memories of running with RCF are the hugs and cheers from teammates following every good (or lousy) race.

Lydia took her RCF commitment to Ingraham HS, where she had an outstanding running career. She qualified for the state cross country meet 3 years. On the track she competed in the Metro championships all 4 years in the 3200 and 3 years in the 1600. She was also dedicated to academics and volunteering, completing the rigorous International Baccalaureate program and serving on the youth board of a non-profit.

This fall Lydia will attend Occidental College in Los Angeles, majoring in Geology with an Environmental Studies concentration, subjects she is passionate about. She will continue running varsity cross country and track. She realizes that running in college is sure to be a new experience and there are sure to be some new nerves. But she will strive for her best and support her teammates with hugs, cheers and perhaps start a Skittle tradition - just as she experienced with Rain City.

Mina Young

Mina was an active Rain City Flyer runner from the age of eight through freshman year in high school. She competed in five national JO cross country championships and five regional competitions for track and field from 2011 through 2015. She was a dedicated team member and was recognized for her commitment with the 2012 “No Excuses” award for missing the lowest number of practices.

Mina carried her interest in running to high school, earning Rookie of the Year from Ingraham’s cross country team and competing, with Anya and Lydia, in the state cross country meet in 2016 as part of the first girls’ team from Ingraham to qualify for the meet since the 1980s. Over time her interests and involvement shifted from running to academics and to community service and activism. She completed her full International Baccalaureate Diploma, earning college credits. And she served as an officer in the Human Rights Club and was active in the Feminism Club and National Honors Society.

RCF track and cross country remain a part of Mina’s community and volunteer activities. She has assisted at practices, served as a course monitor at the Stampede and helped manage field events at meets. Participation in Rain City was influential and significant for Mina, producing many meaningful childhood memories and lasting friendships. From capture the flag and potato chip relays at practices to days spent with teammates at meets and competitions, she learned to work hard for something and enjoyed being on such a fun team – something she will pass on.

Mina will also be attending Occidental College this fall. She plans to study diplomacy and world affairs. While she does not have plans to participate in athletics, she does hope to continue lifelong running for fun-- which has always been an RCF goal.

Congratulations to our 2019 RCF Scholarship recipients! They join 12 past recipients as exemplary athlete/citizen role models, having truly demonstrated “... a commitment to working to achieve their personal best, both as an individual and as a member of the team.” We are proud of their accomplishments, within and beyond Rain City.

2019 Scholarship Committee Members: Dave Fort, Beth Jaculewicz, Gina Tait-Selenis, Susan & Jim Neff

[Click here for more information about the scholarship program and previous recipients.](#)