

2017 Scholarship Recipients

We are proud to announce the winners of the 2017 scholarships:

Leo Donlea joined Rain City in 2010 as a 5th grader afraid of racing. He came to practices, reluctantly raced, but stuck with it. By the next year he was a second scorer on a 3rd place JO national team. He wrote, "I didn't really understand what that meant at the time, but I now know that that changed my life forever." Leo credits the environment at Rain City, juxtaposing hard work and fun, as contributing to both his continuing running and academic success. He approaches both with tenacity and willingness to work hard. Leo competed in three state cross-country meets for Ingraham High School and has maintained a 3.9 GPA. He capped off his high school running career with a third place finish in the 3200 meters at State. Leo returned to Rain City after each season, competing in JOs or helping out with practices and even coaching a younger runner. He will attend the University of San Francisco studying biology with an eye toward sports medicine. Leo will continue to represent the blue and yellow in fun runs wearing his RCF singlet, which is traveling to SF with him!

Nora Fujita-Yuhas competed with the Rain City Flyers cross country team from 2008-2013. Following early success on her Bantam Girls team which won the JO Regional Championship, she had five years learning about "sweat, grit, and comradery." She carried the determination and resolve learned running the inside and outside loops with RCF into her high school cross country and Ultimate Frisbee team experiences with Lakeside. Nora kept her connection to Rain City, volunteering at the Labor Day Half Marathon water table and assisting with the Meadowbrook Community Center track team. Photography has become an interest for Nora, who served as the Photography Editor of the Lakeside high school newspaper and has exhibited in shows at the Seattle and Bellevue Art Museums. She will attend Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA, studying photography and international relations. Racing may not be in Nora's future, but she knows she will continue to run for her own health and happiness!

Christopher Walker loves to run. He started participation in cross country races in middle school and competed as an independent before finding the Rain City Flyers. Unlike most RCF runners who come to the program in grade or middle school, Christopher first competed as a Flyer as a high schooler at JO Nationals 2014 and in 2015. He planned to compete again following his high school XC season in 2016, but a sudden medical challenge forced a change in plans. For the remainder of his senior year Christopher focused his running mentality on regaining his health and graduation, living up to the O'Dea cross-country team awards he had received -- Most Inspirational, Most Improved and the Work Horse. Christopher notes that "... running is great but I enjoyed the sidelines too." You'll find him there when he's not racing, encouraging others and being an inspirational role model for us all. Come autumn Christopher is heading to University of Puget Sound -- where he plans to start a running club.

Alex Whalen competed with the Rain City Flyer cross country team from 2009-2013 and experienced three Junior Olympics Nationals. The highlight of his Rain City cross country career was a third place

team finish in the 2011 Nationals in Myrtle Beach SC. Alex ran on the Ballard High School cross country team for two years and was on Ballard's soccer team for four years. The next chapter of Alex's life will be at the University of Oregon, where he plans to play club soccer and apply to his academics the lesson learned as a runner at RCF-- that hard work pays off.

Owen Whalen ran three seasons with Rain City Flyers, competing at two JO National meets, including as a member of the 11-12 boy's teams that placed third in Myrtle Beach in 2011. He writes that as a Rain City runner he learned "... that hard work pays off, the value of teamwork, and that he is really good at sharks and minnows." Owen put these lessons to use for four years on the Ballard High School soccer team. Come fall Owen will attend Western Washington University. He's not decided on a major, but knows that he will play club soccer and take his RCF learning along. Perhaps he'll teach his soccer team how to play sharks and minnows!