



PRESS RELEASE: Ryan Clark Annual Scholarship to Benefit Ferris State University HVACR Students

Sandy C Gholston to: Archive

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Included below is a press release regarding the Ryan Clark Annual Scholarship at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich. The scholarship will be supported with a second-annual charity run on June 22, 2013. Related questions may be directed to Anne Hogenson, Communication Specialist, University Advancement and Marketing.

The attached photo, courtesy of the Clark family, may be captioned, "Brittany Clark (left) and Ryan Clark (right) proudly show their schools' colors in a 2008 photo."

To read the online version of this story, visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/february/clark.htm>

(See attached file: Brittany and Ryan Clark.jpg)

For Immediate Release

Anne Hogenson

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Ferris State University

Communication Specialist

annehogenson@ferris.edu, (231) 591-2333

Ryan Clark Annual Scholarship to Benefit Ferris State University HVACR Students

BIG RAPIDS, Mich.—Like many 18-year-olds, Ryan Clark was excited about college and looking forward to his future.

The Sterling Heights native, a graduate of Stevenson High School, was a cross-country runner with a great sense of humor who loved being with friends, driving his Jeep, playing intramural football and fixing anything.

"He was pretty amazing," said sister Brittany Clark, described by her parents as "inseparable" from Ryan. "He could fix anything under the sun - could ride in a car, know what was wrong with the car and fix it, like he was an old hand at it."

Ryan's mechanical skills were hardly limited to automobiles, however.

"He was a real hands-on kid," his mother, Karen Clark said. "He could look at something and do it. He put in our dishwasher; he could tell how to do it just by looking."

Ryan's love of fixing things led him to enter Ferris State University's Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration program in 2008.

"The day he got his acceptance letter at Ferris - well, he was more than a little happy," remembered Ryan's father, Rory Clark.

"For Ryan, every day was a new experience. He was one of the most ingenious kids. When he was 14, I taught him how to solder, and he was immediately better at it than I was. He loved working with his hands and just really lived life to its fullest," added Rory. "A dad could never have dreamed of a better son."

In January 2009, in a tragedy that touched the entire Ferris State University community, Ryan was killed in an automobile accident. He lost control of his vehicle in difficult winter driving conditions while traveling to Grand Rapids, where Brittany was studying Account Management at Grand Valley State University. Ryan was little more than halfway through his first year of studies at Ferris.

Brittany, Karen and Rory were devastated, but they also were determined that something good should come of Ryan's passing.

First, they worked with Gift of Life Michigan to donate Ryan's organs, which ultimately helped 50 people, but the family didn't stop there. They began organizing a charity run in Ryan's name. June 2012 saw the first annual Ryan's Run at Washington Township's Westview Orchards, where Ryan had worked during high school.

"We always taught our kids that there's one thing no one can ever take away from you: an education," Rory explains. Proceeds from each annual Ryan's Run will help fund the Ryan Clark Annual Scholarship for HVACR students at Ferris.

"Even after Ryan was accepted and paid tuition, he had still had to buy specialized tools for his classes. We were fortunate enough to be able to get these for him," said Karen. "But, when he passed and we came up to collect his things, we saw the tool bag and thought what a shame it was, that some other student might be able to use it."

The Clarks' initial donation of Ryan's tools served as the inspiration for the scholarship, which will benefit students of Ferris' four-year HVACR program.

Rory, Karen and Brittany believe that it is a fitting tribute to Ryan, whom Rory describes as an "ordinary, extraordinary kid."

"I think he's probably smiling from ear to ear," Rory said of the success of the fundraiser and scholarship. "He'd give the last dime he had to help someone else."

Assistant professor Joseph Compton, of Ferris' HVACR program, was among those who showed their support by running in the 2012 Ryan's Run.

"At the race, it was amazing to see how many people wanted to give back in Ryan's honor," said Brittany. "He was so into Ferris - its people and programs - that, even as a devoted (Grand Valley State) Laker, I wouldn't want to see it go anywhere else."

The family is hard at work again, planning the next Ryan's Run to honor Ryan and support HVACR students at Ferris. The 2013 event is scheduled to take place June 22 at Westview Orchards, with enrollment open to the public.

"Ryan would be very happy to know that there was a scholarship for others to do what he loved," added Karen.

For more information about Ryan's Run, please visit <http://www.active.com/running/washington-township-mi/running-event---ryans-run-2013>. To learn more about the Ryan Clark Annual Scholarship or make a gift, please contact The Ferris Foundation at (231) 591-2365 or fsufdn@ferris.edu. Details about establishing scholarships or endowments may be obtained from the Ferris State University Advancement Office at (231) 591-3825.



Anne Hogenson

Communications Specialist
University Advancement & Marketing
Ferris State University
420 Oak Street, Prudden 101
Big Rapids, MI 49307
Phone: (231) 591-2333
Fax: (231) 591-2985
E-mail: annehogenson@ferris.edu

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- Brittany and Ryan Clark.jpg