



**COLORADO**

**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Lauren Ris, CWCB Director

**TO:** Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

**FROM:** Cole Bedford P.E., Chief Operating Officer

**DATE:** May 15-16, 2024

**AGENDA ITEM:** 9 Diane Hoppe Memorial Scholarship

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### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Board approve a \$2,000 scholarship to Student 1.

### **Introduction**

The Colorado Water Conservation Board administers the Diane Hoppe Memorial Scholarship, which is a \$2,000 one-year scholarship for a Colorado high school student or college freshman interested in western water issues planning to attend a public institution of higher education in Colorado.

Diane Hoppe was appointed to the CWCB as the South Platte Basin representative in 2012 and elected chairwoman of the board in 2015. Diane passed away on February 27, 2016. Her family worked with the Colorado Water Conservation Board to establish this scholarship in her honor.

In addition to serving on the Board, Diane Hoppe served in the Colorado House of Representatives from 1999-2006 and was the chairwoman of the House Agriculture, Livestock & Natural Resources Committee, the Water Interim Committee, and the Water Resources Review Committee. She also served as the minority whip. Diane was a founding member of the Colorado Foundation for Water Education and served as president from 2002-07.

Staff received two applications for the Diane Hoppe Memorial Scholarship for the 2024 scholarship. To protect the privacy of minors, the applicants are referred to as a student number for this memo.

### **Student 1**

Student 1 attends Arvada West High School. Growing up, he developed a passion for space, which he is following by seeking a mechanical engineering degree with a focus on aerospace at the Colorado School of Mines. In the last year, he is most proud of his time lifeguarding, volunteering with National Honor Society, and overcoming his physical limitations as a result of Cerebral Palsy. With respect to water, Student 1 has a family history in arid southwestern Colorado and helped his parents install a xeriscaped garden at their home. He is “inspired to conserve water resources for future generations and building a more informed society.”

### **Student 2**

Student 2 is a senior at Wiggins High School and plans to study journalism at the University of Northern Colorado. She is excited about writing, performing, and helping those around her. She is particularly proud of writing, co-directing, and acting in a school play last year in the face of personal adversity.



Student 2 hopes to use her writing skills to resolve misconceptions around groundwater overuse and push for sustainable action. Student 2, is “determined to make their mark on the world.”

### **Discussion**

While both applicants are passionate and ambitious students with impressive resumes, staff is recommending Student 1 as the 2024 Diane Hoppe Memorial Scholarship awardee because of his strong leadership skills, academic drive, commitment to a career in water, and the example he is setting for other students.

Attachments: Student 1 Application Essay Responses and Letter of Recommendation  
Student 2 Application Essay Responses and Letters of Recommendation



**1. Tell us about your interests and ideas for the future. What would you like to study? What do you want to learn? Why? What is important to you? Is there a specific degree or certification that you would like to earn? How would you use what you learn in the future?**

Growing up with two parents as engineers, I was surrounded by the world of technology and problem-solving. From a young age, my twin brother and I found ourselves immersed in space toys and surrounded by a Moonscape mural in our playroom, which ignited my passion for space. I have set my sights on studying Mechanical Engineering with a focus in Aerospace at Colorado School of Mines with the ultimate goal of becoming an astronaut.

The experiments conducted in space lead to advancements that benefit people on Earth. For example, scientists are able to monitor Earth to get a better understanding of how climate change impacts precipitation patterns. Obviously, the Space Station has perfected a water recycling and filtration system for the crew, and similar technologies can be applied to Earth for the benefit of agriculture, industrial, and drinking water. Data collected from sensors on board the Space Station provide valuable insights into droughts, floods, and water quality. I am inspired to conserve water resources for future generations and build a more informed society.

**2. What do you consider to be your three most important accomplishments (personal and/or academic) during the past year and why?**

- I have worked as a lifeguard for the past 2 years and have experienced the satisfaction of making a difference by saving 9 children from drowning and sparking little kids' interests in becoming lifeguards for their first job someday. I hope to continue working as a lifeguard during college.
- As part of National Honor Society, I have volunteered at Holiday parties, Easter Egg Hunts, and Trick-or-Treat Streets where I have been actively involved in bringing joy to others in a fun and positive way. Whether operating the cotton candy machine, making popcorn, assisting with games, or guiding children during a 5k run, I find satisfaction in creating memorable experiences for children and families.
- I have physical limitations due to Cerebral Palsy and have always been in some type of Occupational or Physical Therapy, but I didn't let that stop me from playing soccer and basketball when I was little or picking up skateboarding and snowboarding. There was a time that I fell so often I quit wearing shorts because my knees were taking a beating. My Physical Therapist told my mom that she enjoys working with patients like me who take it seriously and work hard at improving. During hikes up Pikes Peak to Barr Camp, a total of 14 miles, I am the only one of my friends (and brother) who carried my own heavy backpack the whole way – and I was the first one back the car!

**3. In what way(s) has water, or water related issues, played a part in your life/ How has that influenced your desire to pursue a water related education?**

My family has roots in Colorado dating back to the 1880s, just shortly after the state's incorporation. Working for the railroad brought them to Southern Colorado, establishing family ties in Pueblo that span over a century. Contrary to common perceptions of Colorado with its snow-covered mountains and rivers, Pueblo is more similar the deserts of New Mexico.

## Student 1

My mom's appreciation for water scarcity developed early on, influenced by her upbringing. A decisive moment occurred before my twin brother and I were born when she read "Cadillac Desert" by Marc Reisner, which led her to shift her career from Structural Engineering to pursuing her passion for water. It also inspired her to choose bison over beef in our cooking. In 2003, she joined Denver Water and worked in Conservation. As babies, we were proudly shown off to her co-workers, with our photo taken in front of the well-known Xeriscape Garden. Denver Water coined the word "xeriscape" in 1981 by combining "landscape" with the Greek word "xeros", which means dry. Today the new term for low-water-use plants is ColoradoScape, which encourages more Colorado-friendly plants and less Kentucky bluegrass.

Specializing in helping commercial customers conserve water and optimize irrigation systems, my mom dedicated herself to water conservation. In 2015, a challenging period unfolded as I was diagnosed with cancer when I was in 4th Grade. Simultaneously, we moved into a new house requiring extensive yard work. Coincidentally, Denver Water's Xeriscape Garden was being demolished to make way for a new building, inspiring her co-workers to generously transplant various plants into our new yard. Nearly a decade later, these rescue plants continue to thrive. Since then, we've introduced several more "Gardens in a Box," transforming our yard into a colorful display that not only earns compliments from neighbors but also attracts bees, butterflies, and my personal favorite, hummingbirds. Growing up in Colorado, I have respect for water scarcity. As an avid snowboarder, I understand the significance of a healthy snowpack for the entire watershed, not just for recreational purposes.

### **4. Is there anything you would like the selection committee to know as it considers your application?**

I have already overcome significant challenges, beginning with my premature birth 10 weeks early. The first few months of my life were spent in the NICU, ending with surgery at a different hospital on the other side of town. Remarkably, I was the tiniest patient the ambulance drivers had ever seen.

The hurdles I faced didn't end there. At the age of 9, I was diagnosed with childhood cancer: Burkitt's Lymphoma. While my brother started 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, I was at yet another hospital undergoing 6 rounds of aggressive chemotherapy. Facing the COVID-19 pandemic later in my life felt like a walk in the park compared to the battles I had already conquered. I received the Arvada/Wheat Ridge Service Ambassador Award after being nominated by my science teacher for "overcoming a major life obstacle" and recognized by Ed Perlmutter, Member of Congress.

Through these adversities, I emerged resilient and determined (some would say "stubborn") to enjoy life and prioritize academics. The lessons I learned from those challenging times have left an impact on my life and career ambitions. I am motivated to make a meaningful impact.



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Denver, CO 80204-3412  
303.628.6000  
denverwater.org

February 28, 2024

RE: Scholarship Recommendation for [REDACTED]

To Whom it May Concern,

I am pleased to recommend [REDACTED] as a deserving candidate for your generous scholarship opportunity.

Having known [REDACTED]'s family for over two decades, I've witnessed his character evolve into that of a sweet and polite individual that any organization would be proud to be associated with. My first experience with [REDACTED]'s resilience and determination emerged when he faced a challenging battle with cancer in 2015. Throughout his treatment, he demonstrated remarkable composure and maintained a positive outlook, rarely expressing any complaints. Fortunately, [REDACTED]'s cancer treatment was successful! Thankfully he thrives today as an intelligent young man who has a passion for life. I must believe that when I heard that a teacher commended his efforts to keep remote schooling engaging and impactful during Covid, it was certainly because [REDACTED] had been through, and conquered so much worse.

What a success story to also know that [REDACTED] is now a senior at Arvada West High School who maintains a 4.6 GPA and earning the impressive rank of #13 out of 489 students. [REDACTED]'s dedication to his studies includes a rigorous course load comprising mostly Honors and AP courses.

Beyond academics, [REDACTED] leads an active and fulfilling life. His weekends are filled with adventures alongside his twin brother, a love for his parents and grandparents who were and are so proudly associated with your organization. Stefan dedicates his time to serving as a lifeguard at Apex Parks and Recreation. Additionally, his involvement with the National Honor Society reflects his commitment to community service.

Looking ahead, [REDACTED] aspires to pursue Mechanical Engineering at Colorado State University. While this path poses challenges, [REDACTED] approaches it with a sense of determination that characterizes his journey thus far. I am confident that his tenacity and academic prowess make him an ideal candidate for your scholarship.

I hope you take the time to meet and get to know [REDACTED] so you understand how your generous scholarship could be associated with such a quality individual. Should you require further information to enhance [REDACTED]'s application, please do not hesitate to reach out. I have no doubt that [REDACTED] will continue to achieve great things through his education, and I wholeheartedly recommend him for this special scholarship opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Amy Heidema'.

Amy Heidema, M.S., P.E., PMP  
Denver Water – Director of Engineering  
[amy.heidema@denverwater.org](mailto:amy.heidema@denverwater.org)  
303-628-6625

Diane Hoppe Memorial Scholarship Essay Questions

1 April 2024

1. Tell us about your interests and ideas for the future. What would you like to study? What do you want to learn? Why? What is important to you? Is there a specific degree or certification that you would like to earn? How would you use what you learn in the future?

Every person has a dream. Whether to live life in the limelight, starring in flashy Hollywood films, or settle down with a spouse and enjoy each day as it comes. For as long as I have maintained consciousness, there is nothing more that I have wanted than to make my mark on the world. Since I was a child, I've always been interested in entertaining people. Whether it was from reciting a poem or singing in the church choir for the residents at the retirement home, it felt good to put a smile on someone else's face. Every year that it's been possible, I've acted in every school play at Wiggins High School and was even granted the opportunity to write, co-direct, and act in the most recent play. Also continuing a long-standing interest, I participated in the choir until my senior year, when I had to choose between theater and choir. Being a part of the National Honor Society has also aided me in giving back to my community. From choir concerts to personalized Valentine's cards and treats, nothing is more rewarding than seeing someone have a better day because of you. Keeping this in mind, I plan to continue giving back to my community via writing and graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism. Getting the opportunity to explore different places and share unique stories is a dream of mine. If I can give insight into a foreign issue that is being covered up or help others find the advice they so deeply crave, I'm going to do it. My mission is to learn how to be a better writer and perhaps an ambassador. The world is rapidly changing, and with so many different cultures and values, we should make an effort to bridge gaps and understand each other. With understanding comes respect, with respect comes responsibility, and with responsibility comes cooperation. If the world is more willing to understand and compromise, we can begin to solve pressing issues such as climate change and economic strife.

2. What do you consider to be your three most important accomplishments (personal and/or academic) during the past year and why?

One of the most important accomplishments from this school year is being able to write, co-direct, and act in the school play. It has always been a dream of mine to write a play and see my hard work come to fruition. To have it become a reality my senior year was a dream come true. However, that does not mean it was an easy feat. There were



numerous complications with commitments, timing, and ultimate stress. Regardless, I will never forget the look of pride in my father's eyes or the tight embrace my mother gifted me. Not only was my hard work recognized, but it was praised by my family, friends, and mentors. Another accomplishment that I am proud of is surviving the fallout from the play. Due to lots of complications and buried feelings, I was told that my friendship with my entire friend group was ending and I had to push through it. The details of who was at fault for this seem to never end, but I am alive and well. From petty rumors occurring every day, nasty looks from students I didn't know the names of, and even educators treating me differently, it was incredibly hard. How could my passion project which I sacrificed so much time and effort turn out to be this? No matter how happy everyone was on stage, everything clicked back to reality once the curtains closed. With the help of my family, my best friend, and some kind peers, I survived it. Honest enough, I believe I am thriving. No more worry of who said what, no more stress of upsetting someone to please someone else. It no longer matters. I completed an incredible play and the people who wish to be in my life are here. The final accomplishment that I am proud of completing is getting accepted into my dream school. The University of Northern Colorado allows me to pursue my dreams while remaining close to my family. Not only did my good grades give me acceptance, but I was also given a scholarship from the university due to my GPA ranking.

3. In what way(s) has water, or water-related issues, played a part in your life? How has that influenced your desire to pursue a water related education?

Until I was fourteen years old, I lived incredibly close to the North Platte River and the Ogallala Aquifer. One of the largest and most significant water sources and aquifers in the nation. However, when I learned that we had an estimated 50 more years before the aquifer was completely depleted, a deep sense of dread and frustration overcame me. For as long as I can remember, my tia in Dos Palos, California was constantly in drought. Most times they didn't have enough water to wash their hands or even use the restroom. When I moved to Wiggins, Colorado, numerous people in the neighborhood had the same issue. No one truly understands the importance of water in our ecosystem until it directly affects us. While other people believe we should "ride this out," I think this is the wrong approach. If we as a collective rely on water, most especially because we are a farming community, why can't we contribute to a solution? Not only will preserving our water resources benefit us tomorrow, but 50 years from now, perhaps even thousands. Being a journalist won't only be able to demand more action, but bridge gaps and diffuse misconceptions.

4. Is there anything else you would like the selection committee to know as it considers your application?

This school year has been incredibly intense for me. From emotional turmoil to outside stressful situations, I regret to admit my academic and other performances have not been at their best. To be blunt, my entire life was flipped upside down a week before my passion project was to be presented to the world and everyone around me told me to bottle it up for the greater good. This took a severe toll on my health, physically and mentally. However, I can admit that I'm stronger for it. Perhaps the entire ordeal was devastating and I wish it on no one. Yet it forced me to look at the bigger picture and appreciate my life. The people who are by my side today continuously support me with loyalty, effort, and love. So perhaps I am not the most qualified candidate you will come across. My application may appear to be bland. Despite this, I promise you no other candidate will appreciate this scholarship as much as I do. No other candidate is determined to make their mark on the world, including water-based endeavors. Thank you so much for your consideration.

<https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/CWCB/0/edoc/221308/HoppeScholarshipApplication.pdf>



Student 2

Miranda Harper  
Wiggins High School  
Wiggins, CO  
harperm@wiggins50.k12.co.us

October 1, 2023

To whom it may concern,

It is with pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation for [REDACTED]. I have had the privilege of getting to know [REDACTED] over the past months as the facilitator of a student-directed theater elective. In the time that I have observed [REDACTED], I am confident that she will excel in any endeavor she attempts.

[REDACTED] is one of the most well-spoken students I have encountered in my years of teaching. Her ability to articulate her ideas with clarity and poise is remarkable. This fall, [REDACTED]'s theater class was tasked with writing, directing, and casting their own play. [REDACTED] has been able to convey her ideas to other students in a kind, eloquent, and diplomatic fashion.

Her superior communication skills enable her to be an exceptional leader. [REDACTED]'s theater group is a small class of eight composed of four high school seniors as well as a small group of seventh and eighth grade students. Many other high school seniors might balk at working with students so much younger than themselves, but [REDACTED] has successfully engaged her peers in a collective vision for their play, skillfully incorporating multiple ideas into a cohesive story. She has ensured that all students feel that their contributions are valid and important and has resolved conflicts and disagreements smoothly and fairly. [REDACTED] excels at fostering a sense of unity and purpose among her fellow students, and her ability to motivate and guide others is a testament to her outstanding leadership skills.

I wholeheartedly endorse [REDACTED] for any opportunities she may seek in the future. Her ability to communicate and lead in a kind, creative, and diplomatic nature will serve her well in all of her future academic endeavors. She will undoubtedly contribute positively to any organization or institution she becomes a part of.

Sincerely,

Miranda Harper  
Wiggins High School  
English, Speech, and Theater



Andrew Baker  
Secondary Art Teacher, Wiggins High School.  
[BakerA@wiggins50.k12.co.us](mailto:BakerA@wiggins50.k12.co.us)

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to wholeheartedly recommend [REDACTED] for any and all endeavors. I have had the pleasure of being [REDACTED]'s art teacher for three years.

[REDACTED] came to me as a freshman and has built upon the concepts I've taught her over the years. For many, art does not come naturally and [REDACTED] did not come in with many technical skills. Despite this she has persevered and become quite the talented artist. Beyond her technical skills, her knowledge and creativity allowed her art to shine.

During my time with [REDACTED] I have learned that she is a very successful writer and she continues to pursue challenges in that world. She and her classmates have been writing the school play which will premiere in a few weeks. I can't help but think that much of her writing creativity spills over into her art creativity. [REDACTED] consistently demonstrated exceptional imagination and problem solving that set her apart from her classmates.

In addition to her skills mentioned above, [REDACTED] exhibits strong interpersonal skills and maturity. She is always respectful and mature beyond her years. When I step out of the classroom to run an errand, she's in charge because I know I can trust her to make a good decision if something should arise. She often becomes the voice of reason in the classroom and is level-headed and logical.

Furthermore, [REDACTED] allows herself to be challenged so that she can grow. This year she is in an Independent Study class in which she creates her own curriculum and is overseen by me. She is able to manage her own tasks, create her own projects and seek help when needed. I am completely confident in her ability to work on her own and hold herself accountable.

I am confident that [REDACTED] will excel in her future endeavors, and I wholeheartedly recommend them for any job or program she is interested in. She possesses the qualities and skills necessary to make a significant contribution and will undoubtedly thrive in any setting.

If you have any further questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at [BakerA@wiggins50.k12.co.us](mailto:BakerA@wiggins50.k12.co.us).

Sincerely,

Andrew Baker