

It was deep into the winter slump in February 2012 when Dad burst through the side door and announced to my Mom, sister and me that he was awarded a sabbatical from work – ten weeks off in the summer. As we were exclaiming and congratulating, he turned to my sister, Tayla, and me and asked us to each think about a father-daughter trip we might want to go on. A few weeks later, Tayla politely informed him that she'd like to do cooking classes in San Francisco. My Dad turned to me, and I excitedly blurted out, "I want to hike into Holden Village!" That summer, my Dad and I hiked fifty miles into a remote village in the North Cascades. The next summer, we returned to the North Cascades and did another fifty mile loop. After that, we completed one hundred miles circumnavigating Mt. Rainier on the Wonderland Trail. And the next year, we spent five days exploring the Enchantments in Leavenworth. Every year since 2012, my Dad and I have gone backpacking together. My love for experiencing the outdoors with nothing but a big pack and some hiking poles was born from a small moment, but it has shaped who I am and my goals for the future.

I am now a senior History major at Gonzaga, finishing up my last two months of college. I get asked the dreaded question almost everyday now: what are your plans after you graduate? But I have a pretty cool answer: I'm thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail. The PCT has been my dream ever since that first backpacking trip in 2012. I knew before beginning my freshman year at Gonzaga that I would attempt it after graduation, despite my parents' doubts and all the pushback I had gotten from my family. But thru-hiking all 2,663 miles is my biggest goal and something I am certain I can achieve. I can't wait to see the Sierras, to summit Mt. Whitney, to feel the strength in my legs, to carry all my belongings myself, to be free. But more than that, I am excited to experience nature. I am passionate about conservation and advocating for public land. The PCT would be no more than a fool's quest without public lands, and I hope to channel this passion for advocacy into my future career as an environmental lawyer or psychologist.

I am confident in the passion and perseverance I bring to this endeavor, however, the realities of preparing and planning for such a commitment are challenging. I currently work at Gonzaga's Center for Community Engagement, assisting students, faculty and community partners engage in reciprocal service relationships in the Spokane community. I have upped my hours this semester in order to save money for gear, resupplies and other necessities. I am committed to my training regimen and workout approximately six times per week, including hikes each weekend. I realize though, as a college student, I cannot finance the PCT all by myself. While there are areas such as food and clothing where I can be more economical, some gear is too important and critical for survival and is, therefore, more expensive. I am applying to the Flyin' Ryan Adventure Scholarship because I am inspired by the community Flyin' Ryan has created and am in awe of Ryan's adventuring spirit. His legacy lives on in the adventurers this community has supported and fostered, and I am appreciative that adventurers are willing to support and be in solidarity with their peers.

I would be humbled and honored to receive this scholarship and, if I do, I will utilize the money to help purchase my tent – the Big Agnes Copper Spur HV UL3 and my pack – the ULA Circuit. Furthermore, it is important to have funds set aside while on the trail for purchasing groceries, hostel and hotel rooms and for potential emergencies. All of these items are absolutely essential for my success on the trail and I have done extensive research to determine what I need, utilizing

PCT blogs, thru-hiking narrative books, the Halfway Anywhere site and information from friends who have thru-hiked.

When I blurted out, “I want to hike into Holden Village!” I had no idea I was beginning the start of what I know will be a lifelong passion. But here I am, seven years later, about to embark on the biggest and most challenging experience of my life. I am inspired by Ryan’s zeal for life and adventuring spirit and know that I will carry it with me as I set out on the Pacific Crest Trail.