



Carolyn Cummins, Ph.D. | Director  
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Dear Flyin Ryan Adventure Scholarship Program Selection Committee,

My name is Carolyn Cummins, and I am the Director of the Four Corners Water Center at Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO. I manage water-related programs at FLC, and I also teach classes in our Environment and Sustainability (ENV) and Biology departments. I am writing to enthusiastically recommend one of my students, Lia Young, for the Flyin Ryan Adventure Scholarship. This scholarship would support Lia's travel with Fort Lewis College's Village Aid project this summer to build and implement water systems in rural communities.

Lia was a student in my Field Methods in Aquatic Ecology class in Fall 2025. This class required class time and extensive field trips where students learned sampling techniques for streams, lakes, and wetlands. In working with Lia, I have been consistently impressed by her inquisitiveness, passion, and drive. Lia was genuinely curious about and engaged in class topics and could always be counted on to ask questions and take her knowledge of course topics to the next level. During the course's multiple field trips, Lia was always excited and eager to jump in, try new methods, and learn new skills. Beyond her coursework, Lia is a passionate and driven individual, committed to environmental and social causes. Lia has been consistently involved in community initiatives both on- and off-campus, and among her peers, she is uniquely engaged in important issues affecting her community. As just one example of this, Lia organized and executed a community bike ride fundraiser for COVID relief for the Navajo and White Mountain Apache nations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During Lia's senior year and following her graduation, she has been involved with Fort Lewis College's Village Aid Project (VAP), an organization that works with FLC students to build and implement water systems and other infrastructure in rural communities both domestically and abroad. The Flyin Ryan Adventure Scholarship would help Lia achieve a very important next step in her career – traveling with VAP this summer to build water systems for communities in Zambia. This experience would allow Lia to bridge her environmental science background with her passion for water justice and to apply her skills to an international context. Lia brings a unique and tailored set of skills to this experience, having worked as a water operations professional at Durango's local water reclamation facility. I am confident that Lia is ready to take the next step in her career as an environmental scientist and community engagement professional, and that her summer in Zambia would greatly aid her in this goal. Given Lia's strong work ethic, passion, and experience in environmental and community work, she will serve as an excellent representative of the Flyin Ryan Foundation during her travels.

Should you have any questions about this recommendation, please feel free to reach out to me via email at [ccummins@fortlewis.edu](mailto:ccummins@fortlewis.edu). Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Cummins".

Carolyn Cummins, PhD  
Director | Four Corners Water Center  
Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO