



April 1, 2026

To the Flyin' Ryan Adventure Scholarship Committee,

I am writing with great enthusiasm to recommend Zoey Collins, age 14, for the Flyin' Ryan Adventure Scholarship. In my role as Solitude Teams Manager, and through my years coaching freeride athletes in both Crested Butte, Colorado and with AltaBird Freeride in Utah, I have had the privilege of working with many young skiers and riders. Among them, Zoey stands out as an athlete who genuinely embodies the spirit, values, and adventurous attitude that the Flyin' Ryan Foundation honors.

Zoey has just completed her first year of freeride competition on the Solitude Freeride Team, and from the outset she has approached the sport with passion, determination, and humility. She is athletic and driven, but what truly defines her character is how she shows up as a teammate. Zoey consistently supports and cheers for others, celebrates her peers' successes as enthusiastically as her own, and contributes positively to the team environment. She tries hard every day, not just to improve her skiing, but to be a better teammate, competitor, and person.

The Flyin' Ryan Core Values: living fully, working hard, playing with joy, being self-sufficient while caring for others, are not just ideals for Zoey; they are evident in her actions. She approaches each training day with curiosity and enthusiasm, embracing the challenge and adventure that freeride skiing demands. She plays with the joy and fearlessness of youth while demonstrating a maturity beyond a first-year athlete. Zoey looks out for those around her, skis with awareness of her surroundings, and carries herself with sportsmanship and integrity. She is the kind of athlete who lifts up the entire freeride team and community simply by being part of it.

On a personal note, this scholarship holds deep meaning for me. I had the opportunity to meet Ryan Hawks through competition, and I was immediately drawn to his charisma, passion, and extraordinary skill as a skier which is matched equally by his down-to-earth nature. Losing Ryan helped clarify my own purpose in freeride skiing: not just to participate, but to give back to the freeride family and community as a coach and leader. Over the years, I have written a few letters to the Flyin' Ryan Foundation on behalf of deserving athletes, and I do not take that responsibility lightly. Zoey is, without question, an athlete who reflects Ryan's legacy and the values this scholarship represents.

I also want to share that Zoey's family has faced unexpected financial hardship this season. Despite these challenges, Zoey continues to show up motivated, focused, and deeply committed to her goals. Any amount of support provided through the Flyin' Ryan Adventure Scholarship will go directly toward enabling a passionate, hard-working, and sportsmanship-first athlete to continue pursuing her dream. Zoey has both the character and the drive to make the most of this opportunity.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting athletes who live with adventure, kindness, and purpose. I wholeheartedly recommend Zoey Collins as a recipient of the Flyin' Ryan Adventure Scholarship and am confident she will carry Ryan's values forward in everything she does.

With gratitude and respect,

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