



UPDATE

Hunter Brooks Watson Memorial Fund
FALL 2023

Hunter's Fund

P.O. Box 326, McLean, VA 22101
(703) 448-0436

This publication paid for with a gift from the Watson family

OUR VISION

YOU MAKE THE POWER OF YOUNG IDEAS POSSIBLE



Hunter Watson

Your generosity has made it possible for Hunter's Fund to support creative young minds whose ideas could impact us in a positive way tomorrow, as well as make our roads safer.

When we lost our son Hunter, my wife Judy and I felt compelled to carry on his spirit of passion and service. That's why we supported this fund - to empower other talented young people to pursue their dreams, just as Hunter did every day.

Six years later, thanks to you, we've provided over 80 grants to youth across America and beyond. We've also spread awareness about distracted driving to tens of thousands of students throughout the country.

This success comes from your steadfast support. Your donations have ignited sparks in young minds and saved lives on the road. For this, we are deeply thankful.

Please consider renewing your support if able. With your help, we can continue to make a difference in young lives and road safety.

Thank you for your support!
Jerry Watson

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We are deeply honored that you have placed your trust in Hunter's Fund's work. We work hard to make the most of every dollar you donate by using volunteers and keeping overhead costs low. When you give to the Fund, you can give with confidence, knowing that most of your gift will propel young people's dreams and help end distracted driving.

You Helped Fund Six Young Entrepreneurs



Frank Marin, Burnt Hills, NY
Grant to study Space Debris Solution

Frank Marin remembers being inspired by NASA as a child to pursue aerospace engineering.

Now a student at Syracuse University, Marin is one step closer to developing new technology to address the growing issue of space debris thanks to a grant from Hunter's Fund.

Originally from Burnt Hills, NY, Marin became interested in the problem of space debris in Earth's orbit as a high school student. His passion led him to pursue aerospace engineering at Syracuse with plans to also complete an MBA.

With the grant from Hunter's Fund, Marin will develop a prototype over the next year to capture and remove dangerous space debris using specialized technology.

Marin believes his concept can reduce collisions from the over 750,000 pieces of debris currently in orbit - unlike other proposed solutions.

"I want to make something that has a positive impact on the world," he said. "This technology can help the space industry for years to come."

The Hunter's Fund awards grants annually to young people and students like Marin pursuing promising ideas in entrepreneurship, research, and the arts.

We're proud to support his innovative concept to improve safety in space exploration.



Space Debris has reached 750,000 pieces

Support for Innovative Mental Health Technology

Recent UC San Diego graduate Norah Al-Azzam has a passion for improving mental health treatment.

Driven by the global mental health crisis, she co-founded a startup called NanoMood in 2020 to develop technology that continuously monitors mental health biomarkers.

"Our goal is to harness technology and data to create innovative mental health solutions," said Al-Azzam. "We want to make a meaningful difference for those struggling with mental illness."

NanoMood's wearable device aims to quantify mental states in real time by tracking key biological and physiological data. This provides patients and doctors with insights to enable earlier intervention and lifestyle changes.

With a grant from Hunter's Fund, NanoMood will further develop its prototype and conduct pilot studies in partnership with UC San Diego Health and the VA.

Originally from San Diego, Al-Azzam became passionate about this cause while earning her neuroscience degree from UC San Diego.

Driven by the global mental health crisis, she believes NanoMood's technology has potential to revolutionize mental health treatment and significantly improve patient outcomes.

We're proud to support Al-Azzam's promising idea through the Hunter's Fund grant. Her entrepreneurial spirit and passion for improving mental health treatment exemplify the values of Hunter's Fund.



Norah Al-Azzam, San Diego CA

Continued on page 2

You can support these Young Entrepreneurs and Safe Driving Campaigns at: www.hunterwatson.org/donate



Sasha Stoppi, Miami, FL

Plushies Promote Neurodiversity

Sasha Stoppi, a senior at New World School of the Arts in Miami, has been awarded a Hunter's Fund grant to launch her business - Pudding Buddies.

These plush toys are designed to meet the needs of neurodiverse kids

through built-in "stimming tools" that provide sensory input. Stoppi is neurodivergent herself and created Pudding Buddies to offer comfort, sensory stimulation, and community connection.

The grant will allow her to manufacture an initial production run and bring the plushes to market.

She hopes her trendy plush char-

acters will increase understanding and acceptance of conditions like ADHD, autism, and anxiety.

Stoppi has already won multiple youth business competitions for Pudding Buddies, including first place regionally among 23,000 NFTE applicants.

She is confident the toys can make a difference for neurodiverse children who need supportive tools for self-regulation.

We're proud to support Stoppi's promising idea that exemplifies the values Hunter's Fund - using creativity and passion to help others. Pudding Buddies has potential to create an impact.

"I'm passionate about educating others and helping neurodivergent kids like me," said Stoppi.



Pudding Buddies for Neurodiverse Kids

Expansion for Successful Podcast Business

Jacob O'Connor has been perfecting his podcasting skills since high school.

After years of recording episodes focused on inspiring conversations, he launched Real Conversations in 2022.

Hunter's Fund first learned of Jacob after he had successfully landed an interview with Netflix founder Reed Hasting and we were able to help him improve his podcasting studio.

Now a student at Wichita State University, O'Connor has been awarded another Hunter's Fund grant to upgrade his studio equipment and continue his successful podcast business.

He's dedicated over 4,500 hours to podcasting in the past four years.

The grant will allow O'Connor to

purchase upgraded microphones, headphones, and other gear to continue producing high-quality episodes as his listenership expands.

"I want to impact others through podcasting. Growing my audience matters because the more listeners, the more I can inspire," said O'Connor.

"This equipment means the world to me. It will take the podcast to a whole new level," said O'Connor.

He sees the podcast as his lifelong legacy.

Originally from Columbia, IL, O'Connor is passionate about having authentic discussions and motivating people to chase their dreams through his podcast.

We're proud to support his entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to inspiring others.



Jacob O'Connor, Columbia, IL



Matthew Andrew Braxton, El Paso TX

Grant for Modular Computer Cases to Reduce E-Waste

Matthew Braxton, an engineering student at the University of Texas at El Paso, wants to make technology more sustainable.

With a grant from Hunter’s Fund, he plans to manufacture and distribute eco-friendly modular computer cases through his startup Revcorp PC.

Braxton will 3D print the patent-free cases using biodegradable PLA filament made from algae, instead of plastic. The cases’ interchangeable parts allow specific components to be replaced, extending the computer’s lifespan and reducing electronic waste.

He plans to make the design open-source.

A graduate of Pebble Hills High School, Braxton started Revcorp PC to provide quality, affordable computers and technology services in El Paso.

“Proprietary parts contribute greatly to e-waste. Our modular cases empower users to modify and repair computers themselves,” said Braxton.

The grant will help him distribute the sustainable cases commercially while allocating profits to supply refurbished computers to those in need.

We’re proud to support Braxton’s promising idea to creatively tackle electronic waste. His innovative thinking and dedication to service exemplify the spirit of Hunter’s Fund.

Musician Creates Audio Books Promoting Wellness

Driven by her passion for music, writing, and wellbeing, musician Louisa Hygate in Bristol UK has been awarded a Hunter’s Fund grant to produce an audio book series called Storio - promoting positive mental health in 8 to 12 year olds.

Each 20-30 minute episode will teach mindfulness, gratitude, and wellbeing through adapted fables and original ideas. Hygate will compose lyrical songs and music for each story to uniquely engage young listeners.

“I want to use my skills to help prepare children for the journey ahead,” said Hygate. She has taught music lessons and performed music therapy,

“Storio’s goal is to build narratives around facing life’s challenges,” said Hygate.

learning music’s impact on wellbeing.

The grant will allow Hygate to purchase high-quality audio recording equipment and software to produce the series. She’ll collaborate with voice actors and illustrators to bring the stories to life.

The musical audio books will fill a need for mental health content tailored to younger audiences.

We’re excited to support this creative entrepreneurial project exemplifying the spirit of Hunter’s Fund.



Louisa Hygate, Bristol UK

HUNTER’S TEAM • FALL 2023

OUR VISION

To live in a world where our youth may follow their hearts.

OUR MISSION

Hunter’s Fund has dual missions in support of young adults. The first is to provide resources to help advance the dreams of passionate, curious young people.

The second is to reduce deaths and injuries from distracted driving by increasing awareness among

young drivers and gaining their commitment to change.

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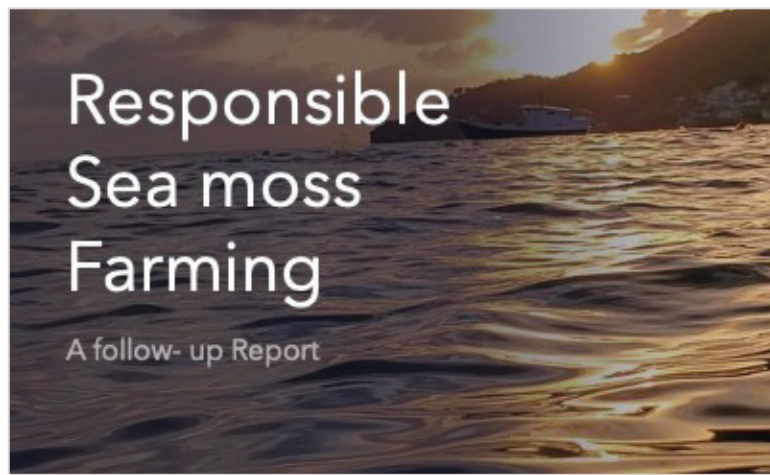
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Kathy Ward, CFRE

TECHNOLOGY VOLUNTEER

Michael McCarn

Sea Moss Business Succeeding with Hunter's Grant



Here's an update from an ambitious young Grant Winner from the Caribbean island of Bequia.

Tavio Simmons was a beneficiary of a Hunter's Grant, using funds raised locally, helping him realize his dream of exploring the future of sea moss farming.

With help from a local non-profit organization in 2020, Tavio received training in sea moss farming, providing him with the knowledge he needed in subsurface aquaculture and the potential for the local economy for this efficient farming method already successfully tested in neighboring islands.

Sea Moss is a red seaweed found along the coasts and is prized for its health benefits.

Rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, traditionally used in foods, remedies and skin care products.

Upon launching his business, a grant from Hunter's Fund provided Tavio with scuba diving training and scientific data collection equipment needed to improve the yield and quality of his sea moss.

Here is Tavio's 6-month Report on his efforts.

Six-Month Grant Progress Report

"Our initial methods, featuring a simple yet innovative combination of rope and recycled bottles for flotation, have been upgraded thanks to the grant from Hunter's Fund.

Now, we employ robust pipe frames and effective cement-made anchors, ensuring our sea moss farms resist strong ocean currents. These upgrades have enhanced our operations and drawn significant interest from tourists and locals alike."

Our venture operates as a three-man team, focusing on identifying strengths, overcoming challenges, and building a successful and sustainable sea moss business in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

We're taking strides toward business registration, effective branding, and rigorous market research to scale our business and offer our products internationally. Looking ahead, we have outlined a few key objectives:

Phase 1 - We aim to launch a fully operational website with redesigned product packaging.

Phase 2 - We hope to replace our row boat with a proper motor boat to aid our operations.

Phase 3 - our vision is to establish a climate-smart facility for processing, packaging, and preparing sea moss for distribution and export.

I want to extend our gratitude to the supporters of Hunter's Fund. Without you, none of this would be possible.

We're confident that our team will reach new heights in their venture with your backing.

Thank you for being a crucial part of this journey.

Tavio Simmons

Bequia Island

St. Vincent & the Grenadines, West Indies



Seaweed Growing



Seaweed Drying on Beach

The Red Book a complete history of Grants and Awards

This Spring Hunter's Fund published the first Red Book, showcasing the young people who have been funded by Hunter's Fund.

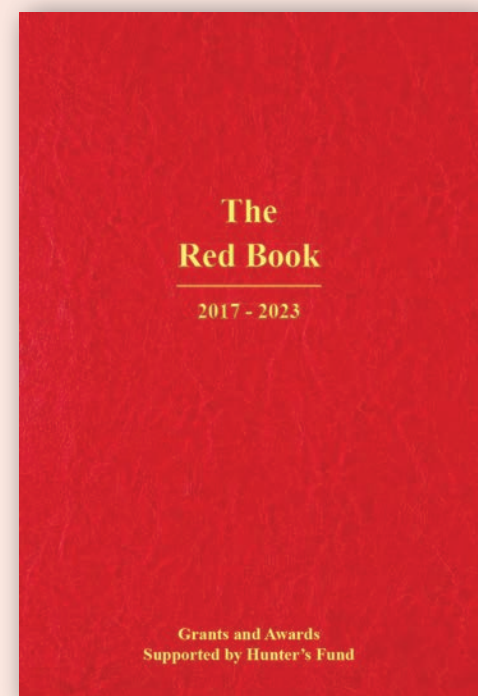
Thanks to the generous support of our donors the Red Book serves as a written and permanent testament to our impact on these lives.

These grants and awards have already made a significant difference, with many recipients having achieved their goals, while others are well on their way. We should be truly grateful to be a part of this transformative process.

Now available online as a stunning online flip book, you can flip through the pages, read the stories, and learn more about the ideas and achievements of these young people, all from the comfort of your own screen and at your own pace. Visit <https://www.hunterwatson.org/red-book>.

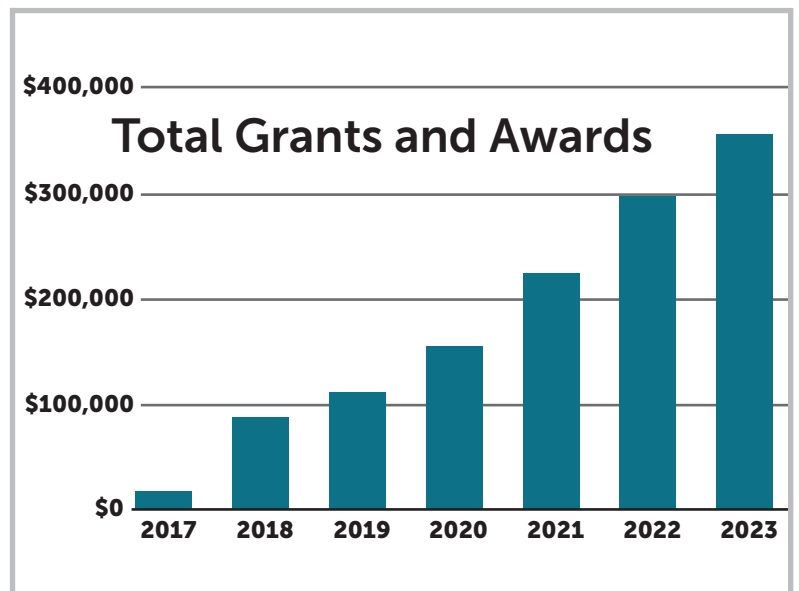
To ensure that donations continue to be dedicated for these grants and awards, the publication was made possible by a special donation from the Watson family to cover the cost of this first Red Book. We hope there will be many more to come.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our supporters and for the positive difference they are making in the lives of these young people.



View at:

<https://www.hunterwatson.org/red-book>



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Founding Committee

Every individual on the Founders Committee held a close bond with Hunter Watson. Their support played a pivotal role in setting up the Hunter Watson Memorial Fund (or Hunter's Fund). This fund was designed to back young innovators and foster safer road conditions. In just six short years, the organization has been flooded with

applications, providing financial aid to over 80 bright, innovative young minds who would otherwise have been unable to follow their dreams due to financial constraints. Additionally, the fund has financed more than 100 Safe Driving Weeks across college and high school campuses.



Luigi Ambrosi
 Milan, Italy



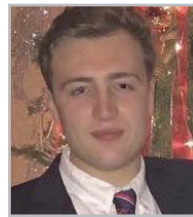
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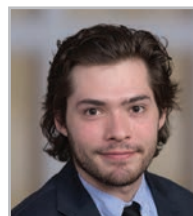
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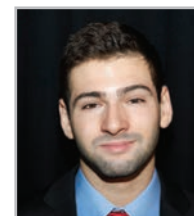
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 Palo Alto, CA

Prominent Group lends support to Hunter's Grant Program



Blackstone LaunchPad is a program started by the Blackstone Charitable Foundation designed to support entrepreneurial learning

and activity among college students and provide them with the tools necessary to launch successful ventures to foster entrepreneurship and innovation.

It operates from a network of campuses around the world and provides aspiring student entrepreneurs with mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to a range of resources including workshops, events, and "Shark Tank" likecompetitions.

It was the Blackstone Launchpad

at Syracuse where Hunter's Fund first encountered a small group of students receiving Grants from Hunter's Fund and also participating in the Blackstone LaunchPad programs.

This past Spring we asked the Blackstone Foundation to help us engage with their network of campuses where their programs were established to help more young entrepreneurs be made aware of the Hunter's Fund mission and help uncover more innovative and creative ideas

to apply for Hunter's Grants.

With their assistance we have seen the number of applications during the current Round triple with some of the most creative applications we've ever received.

Thanks to the Blackstone Launchpad for their support in helping Hunters Grants reach more young innovators.

Safe Driving Weeks Reaches 16 More Campuses

The effectiveness of Hunter's Pledge to end distracted driving hinges on the commitment of students, one pledge at a time. Initially, Hunter's fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi, provided volunteers to facilitate this on campuses. However, as the initiative gained traction, more volunteers were needed.

To meet this demand, Phi Kappa Psi began collaborating with sororities. The resulting partnership was instrumental in reaching many more students.

Achievement from this past Spring include:

- **University of Louisiana at Lafayette:** Inclusion of sororities led to a record-breaking 533 pledges.
- **Oregon State University:** A blend of creative events, like a Greek Game show, spurred 1600 pledges.

- **University of Oregon:** Despite being a small team of 15, they encouraged over 100 pledges in their debut Safe Driving Week.

- **University of Minnesota Duluth:** Gaining consistent support from campus police, they've hosted the campaign for seven consecutive years.

- **University of Nebraska:** Interactive events like "Pie-a-Phi-Psi" enhanced their campaign.

- **Penn State University:** They expanded outreach with a month-long campaign this spring, following a successful fall campaign.

- **Miami University of Ohio:** With the support of alumni, they collected 300 pledges in their inaugural Safe Driving Week.

- **Allegheny College:** A unique raffle prize and parent networking increased pledge numbers.

- **Indiana State University:** Their Chili Cook Off engaged diverse student groups.

- **DePaul University:** After gathering 500 pledges this spring, they're considering a fall campaign.

- **University of Alabama at Huntsville:** Alumni backing boosted their first Safe Driving Week.

- **University of Toledo:** Partnering with a sorority, they hosted varied events like car washes and increased pledges.

- **Saint Joseph's University:** Following a campus merger, they organized campaigns at two locations, including a benefit concert.

- **University of Pennsylvania:** Collaborated with a sorority for events like bake sales, achieving their goal of 100 pledges.

- **York College:** Their first-time campaign involved alumni support and bi-weekly tabling for a month.

- **Towson University:** Their experience enabled them to host an independent Safe Driving Week without external help.



Students signing pledges not to drive distracted



Volunteers between classes



Building Awareness with Bumper Stickers



**Hunter's Pledge
Saving Lives
on Campuses**

- University of Alabama
- Allegheny College
- Beloit College
- UC Berkeley
- Brandeis University
- Univ. of California Davis
- Cal State Northridge
- Cal State-San Luis Obispo
- Capital University
- Coe College
- University of Colorado
- Cornell University
- University of Dayton
- DePaul University
- Drexel University
- Edinboro University
- Elberta High School
- Emporia State University
- Fairmont State University
- Foley High School
- University of Georgia
- Indiana State University
- Iowa State University
- University of Kansas
- University of Kentucky
- Lafayette College
- University of Louisiana-Lafayette
- Lycoming College
- University of Maryland
- Miami University of Ohio
- University of Minnesota Duluth
- University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- University of Nebraska
- Northern Illinois University
- University of Oklahoma
- Oregon State University
- University of Oregon
- Penn State University
- University of Pennsylvania
- Perdue University
- Potomac School
- University of Rhode Island
- Saint Joseph's University
- Simpson College
- Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville
- Stanford University
- Stephen F. Austin State University
- SUNY Oneonta
- Syracuse University
- University of Texas
- Texas Tech University
- University of Toledo
- Towson University
- University of Utah
- University of Virginia
- Wabash College
- Washington & Jefferson College
- West Georgia College
- West Point High school
- University of Valparaiso
- York College

WAYS TO SUPPORT THESE PROGRAMS

Mark Your Calendar for Giving Tuesday Tuesday, November 28, 2023



GIVING TUESDAY

You Can Make A Lasting Difference

You can help provide for the future of the Hunter's Fund Grants Program by leaving a gift in your will to the Fund. We recommend that you consult with your attorney when drafting a new will, changing an existing will or when creating a living revocable trust, if you wish to include a gift for the Hunter's Fund Grants Program and Safe Driving Program.

Hunter's Fund official name: **The Hunter Brooks Watson Memorial Fund**

Hunter's Fund mailing address: **P.O. Box 326, McLean, VA 22101**

Hunter's Fund telephone number: **(703) 448-0436**

Hunter's Fund identification: **A not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code**

Hunter's Fund tax-exempt number: **EIN 83-0574041**

Sample Language

"I give, devise and bequeath to the Hunter Watson Memorial Fund for its general purposes [state fraction or percentage of the rest, residue and remainder] or [the sum of \$ _____] in my estate, both, real or personal"

For additional information, please contact:

Kathy Ward, Volunteer Development Director,
Hunter's Fund, P.O. Box 326, McLean, VA 22101,
Phone: 1-703-448-0436

Gifts to Charity from your IRA are **TAX-FREE**



As you consider your end of year charitable gifts, imagine if you could shape a better future *without touching your bank account today.*

Here's a simple yet powerful way to help: consider a gift from your *Individual Retirement Account (IRA).*

If you are 70½ or older, you can make a difference with a tax-free gift from your IRA. This is an effective and efficient way to support Hunter's Fund and the causes you love.

As long as you are giving directly from the IRA to Hunter's Fund or any qualified charitable organization, you can help us continue our mission, improve lives, and create lasting change - *without any impact on your current lifestyle or your family's security.*

Use your IRA to make a difference today. Ensure your legacy tomorrow.



**YOU CAN HELP BY DONATING
ON-LINE AT OUR SECURE
DONATION WEB SITE:**

<https://www.hunterwatson.org/donate>



OTHER WAYS YOU CAN GIVE

- 1. Retirement Fund Gifts** - Beneficiary designations - Name the Hunter Watson Memorial Fund or any charity you choose to support as an ultimate beneficiary of your IRA, 402(K) or other qualified plan.
- 2. IRA** - Did you know if you are 70 1/2 or older there is a provision that allows you to make cash gifts from your IRA to the Hunter Watson Memorial Fund or any charity you wish without having to pay any taxes that would otherwise be due.
- 3. Securities** - Donating appreciated stock or Mutual Funds is quick and simple and may provide you with significant tax benefits.
- 4. Donor-Advised Funds** - Manage your charitable giving through this convenient, flexible, and most effective alternative to establishing a private foundation.

For additional information, please contact:

Kathy Ward, Volunteer Development Director
Hunter's Fund at **1-703-448-0436.**



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Hunter Watson Many Interests – One of a Kind



The inspiration and our mission come from Hunter himself. He was a young man of extremely diverse talents and interests. Wherever he went, whatever he did, he brought a spark and a smile and a contagious energy that inspired those around him.

And while his life was too short, and the hurt that those who loved him feel will never fully heal, there is a peace that comes from knowing that Hunter succeeded in *getting the most out of every day he lived*:



As a boy and a young man ...

Hunter lit up the lives of his mother, Judy, his father, Jerry, his older brother, Teddy, and all his extended family.

As a friend ... Hunter cultivated deep and lasting relationships and will never be forgotten by those who knew him best.



As an athlete ... Hunter loved baseball, soccer, football and wrestling, excelling as an individual while always striving to lift up his teammates.



As a musician ... Hunter formed his first band at age 10 and never stopped loving, playing and performing music. (You can watch a video of Hunter's Black Out Band playing their song "Video Games" on YouTube.)



As a student ... Hunter graduated from Potomac School, enrolled at Syracuse University and joined Phi Kappa Psi, learning and growing and making new friends each year – while never forgetting his old ones.



As an entrepreneur ... Hunter worked with area nightclubs to encourage teens-only, no-alcohol nights which he then managed and promoted. He was also beginning work on his own technology-based business.

As a person ... there will never be another Hunter. While he had many interests, he was one-of-a-kind. Thank you for supporting Hunter's Fund, so that young men and women with talent, energy and passion can have a chance to follow their dreams ... **just as Hunter did every day.**

BEYOND THE REPORT CARD: SEARCHING FOR PASSION AND DEDICATION



Hunter's Fund believes the American education system overemphasizes grades, which don't always reflect individuals' potential. Criticisms of grade-driven education include:

Learning for the Test

Overemphasis on grades and standardized tests may limit curriculum to "teach to the test" rather than produce well-rounded individuals, not just those who can excel in examinations and undermining holistic development.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Standardized tests may stifle creativity and critical thinking—skills essential for real-world problem-solving but hard to measure through multiple-choice questions.

Stress

Persistent academic pressure can negatively affect students' mental health and overall well-being.

Inequity

Socioeconomic disparities arise when students from affluent families access resources like tutors to score better, disadvantaging less privileged students.

Other Skills

Schools focusing heavily on grades might overlook students' emotional and social development, which are critical for life success in life.

Learning Motivation

Grades-oriented learning could undermine intrinsic motivation, leading students to pursue high scores instead of true understanding of the subject.

Lack of Individual Assessment

Standardized tests disregard individual learning styles and pace, potentially misrepresenting some students' understanding or capabilities.

While recognizing the necessity of assessment for accountability and improvement, striking a balance to encourage love for learning, creativity, and holistic development is crucial.

Hunter's Fund employs alternative assessment methods, examining candidates' passion, time investment in interests, and self-expression through short videos. This approach acknowledges potential beyond traditional grading systems, promoting diverse skills and unique perspectives potentially overlooked by GPAs.

Our philosophy isn't meant to undermine academics or the perseverance grades may signify. Instead, we assert that an individual's potential cannot be solely determined by standardized test performance.

Our goal is fostering an environment that values passion, creativity, resilience—traits often underappreciated in traditional academic settings. By assessing candidates' commitment and dedication, we provide an equal opportunity for all, regardless of socio-economic or academic background.

Our innovative approach encourages students to embrace learning beyond scores, to cultivate their individuality, and to grow into well-rounded individuals prepared to contribute to society significantly.

We stand firm in our belief that every student has a unique spark. Our unconventional methodology is our commitment to igniting that spark, nourishing it, and enabling it to illuminate and grow into a flame that will light up the future.. By focusing on the person over the grade, we honor Hunter's legacy and drive meaningful change in education and beyond.