



## 3rd Annual Smilin' Rylen Memorial Scholarship

### **Background Information:**

This scholarship was created and sponsored by Rick and Betsy Mudra, Rylen's Pawpaw and Mimi to honor the memory and legacy of Rylen Quinn Cowan, also known as Smilin' Rylen. Rylen earned his angel wings at the young age of 13.5 months old on June 5, 2017 after a short battle with Bacterial Meningitis. Though tragic, the Cowan family chose the opportunity of organ donation for Rylen, and he quickly became a hero overnight, as he saved 5 lives through organ donation. Rylen's memory is alive and well, as the Smilin' Rylen Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization was established in 2017, along with an annual local run in Katy, Texas. The funds raised are given back to families in crisis, while simultaneously raising awareness about organ donation. Rylen's Pawpaw and Mimi lovingly wanted to do another good deed in Rylen's memory and created an Annual Smilin' Rylen Memorial Scholarship. The details of the memorial scholarship are listed below. Please read carefully. To learn more about Rylen and the Smilin' Rylen Foundation, please visit: [www.smilinrylenfoundation.org](http://www.smilinrylenfoundation.org)

### **Details of Scholarship:**

- Amount given to winner: \$500 plus donations given during the donation period of 11/24/2024-12/31/2024
- Grand total of \$1,800 for 2025
- Who is eligible: seniors in a Katy ISD high school who meet eligibility requirements
- Opening date to apply: January 1st, 2025
- Deadline for application: April 26th, 2025 at midnight. No late applications will be accepted.
- All essays must be sent to: [scholarship@smilinrylenfoundation.org](mailto:scholarship@smilinrylenfoundation.org)
- ONE winner will be announced on or before June 5th, which is Rylen's Angelversary.

### **Purpose and Eligibility Criteria:**

This scholarship has been created to help bring greater awareness to the subject of organ donation. The scholarship will be awarded to a 2025 graduating high school senior from a Katy ISD school, who plans to attend an accredited college, university, or institution of higher learning in the Fall of 2025. (two-year, four-year, or technical school). The scholarship money will only be used toward direct educational expenses, such as books, enrollment fees, or tuition. The winner will receive a check made out to the school that will be attended (in the Fall 2025) Funds will come directly from the Smilin' Rylen Foundation, along with the winner's name referenced on the check. Proof of registration for classes will be required in order to receive the check. In

addition, the recipient will need to get a verification form from the university (usually found on their website), that can be filled out by the student and sent to us, and partnered with the scholarship so the check gets applied directly to the winning student's school account.

*The Smilin' Rylen Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or any other restricting classification in selection of scholarship applicants or winners.*

**Application Requirements:**

-The scholarship application must be completed in its entirety. (essay and personal information form below)

-Katy ISD High School Transcript (**PDF ONLY, NO "PARCHMENT" LINKS**)

-1 letter of recommendation from a responsible community, school, or church professional, non-family member.

-a single page typed essay on the topic of "Organ Donation" **with your name at the top**, sent to: [scholarship@smilinrylenfoundation.org](mailto:scholarship@smilinrylenfoundation.org)

-The recipient of the winning essay must be willing to share the essay or small excerpt via social media, in hopes to help others learn about organ donation. (fb, online newsletter, instagram, etc.)

Essay winner will be determined by a **panel of judges, including** Rylen's Mimi and Pawpaw notified on or before June 5th, Rylen's Angelversary.

Good Luck and God Bless  
Betsy and Rick Mudra  
(Mimi and Pawpaw)  
The Smilin' Rylen Foundation

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**Please include the following information with your essay and send in the following order.**

**Page 1: Applicant Information Sheet**

**Page 2: Recommendation Letter**

**Page 3: Essay**

**Applicant Information Sheet**

Name of Applicant:

Address:

Date of Birth:

Phone number: (C)

Email Address:

Parent Name(s) and email(s):

Name of High School you are graduating from: **(must be a Katy ISD school)**

What is the name of the 2-year college, 4-year college, or technical school you plan to attend?

Please list chronologically beginning with your freshman year of all the organizations, activities, special recognition, and awards at school, church and community service you are involved with.

**Example below:**

Year	Involvement Activity/Organization