

To the Families of Ellis Heyer and Collin LaMore,

Like others before me, receiving this award is truly an honor. This award encompasses everything that the OPP represents. Not only does this program provide an outdoor experience for students but also establishes a community that is rich in culture and optimism. When I first took wilderness survival from Michael I was intrigued by the curriculum, mostly because I was not the most familiar with the topics: navigation, first aide, nutrition, and knot craft. After wilderness survival I met Dan through a bouldering class he was instructing and I started to become more intrigued by these outdoor pursuit classes through the enthusiasm and dedication the instructors put into these courses. Learning and becoming familiar with these skills and topics provided me with confidence and eventually blazed a trail into the leadership program.

Throughout the program I was introduced to other students who shared this appreciation for the outdoor world and also possessed friendly and holistic qualities. As I continued through the program I realized that there was so much more to this program than just climbing mountains and crossing streams; it is a program that teaches us about ourselves in ways more than one. We are exposed to our personal limits and how to push those limits in strategic ways, we learn how to communicate with each other in effective manors, we gain an appreciation for the natural world and how we can help preserve it, and we understand that sometimes things in life we will face adversity. Everyone is going to experience adversity in life. How we handle adversity says a lot about our character and how we represent ourselves to there. This program gives students the opportunity to practice dealing with adversity and overcoming it through outdoor pursuits and course work.

For me, the next step is pursuing a career in the outdoor recreation field and I will be working at a raft guide outfit for the summer "Orange Torpedo Trips". I realize that I might not always have a job in the outdoor field but I will apply the leadership skills that I learned in this program to everything I continue to do in my professional career.

This award makes me think about all the times in life I was dealt with adversity and how I was able to overcome it because I had such a strong community of people in the OPP that I could always talk to and get support from. Thank you so much for providing the opportunity for students to receive this award and honor the families of Collin and Ellis because its keeps the fire going and reminds us of the tough times that we may encounter and how we can generate positive outcomes from those tough times.

Respectfully,
Garret Lofing