

I am pleased to recommend Tyler Smith for the TCI Foundation Scholarship. Over the past three years at Merrill F. West High School, I have watched him grow into one of the most dedicated, community-minded, and service-oriented students on our campus. As a four-year member of the Space & Engineering Academy, they have excelled academically and technically, earning multiple student-voted awards, the SEA block for maintaining a 3.25 GPA for two years, and completing more than 150 hours of community service. Their senior engineering project a custom-built pickleball court cart for Art Freiler School, demonstrated not only skill and creativity but a genuine desire to improve their community.

Beyond engineering, Tyler has shown exceptional leadership and discipline through JROTC, earning distinctions such as the Rocketry Badge, Good Conduct Ribbon, Dress & Appearance Ribbon, Saber Ribbon, and Academic Ribbon. They have also contributed to our school culture through participation in baseball, NDC, Chess Club, and even performing in the West High Lip Sync. In SEA competitions, they earned first place in the Lego Tower Seismic Challenge two years in a row and first place in Biology and Chemistry for their yeast-powered car projects. Tyler's involvement is broad, but his commitment is consistent; he shows up, work hard, and elevates the people around them.

What truly distinguishes Tyler is his character. He regularly volunteers at the Boys & Girls Club to tutor younger students, often assist teachers with classroom needs, and has donated seven units of blood with the goal of reaching a full gallon. Teachers and counselors alike know him as respectful, dependable, and intrinsically motivated. Tyler's long-term plan to serve in the United States Space Force and eventually return to West High as an engineering teacher reflects a maturity and sense of purpose that is rare in high school students. His recent acceptance to Montana State University with a \$14,000 academic scholarship further demonstrates his academic potential and drive.

Tyler is exactly the type of student the TCI Foundation Scholarship is designed to support. Hardworking, community-oriented, and committed to a future of service. I recommend them without reservation and am confident they will continue to lead with integrity and purpose.

Sincerely,  
Casey Wichman  
Teacher  
Merrill F. West High School  
cwichman@tusd.net  
(209) 914-9032