

# Meet Hastings Moffitt, One of This Year's Recipients of The Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund



This spring, The ALS Association awarded \$470,000 in scholarships to 94 students across 35 states for the 2020-2021 school year through [The Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund](#). Established in 2019, the fund was created to support post-high school education for students whose lives have been financially impacted by ALS. Scholarship recipients receive \$5,000 per year to help cover the cost of education.

While the ongoing pandemic continues to put schools across the country at a disadvantage as they are trying to figure out distance learning and quarantines, we continue to do what we can to make sure the students in our ALS community are able to overcome the devastating financial impact of ALS.

The Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund was established by Mark Calmes, vice chair of The ALS Association's National Board of Trustees. The scholarship fund is named in honor of his late wife, Jane, who lived with ALS for eight years until her passing in August 2017. "After she died, I began to think of ways to honor her courageous spirit and compassion," said Mark. "The idea of a scholarship program resonated with me because Jane was always keen on the lifelong benefits provided by education."

We recently talked with Hastings Moffitt, one of this year's award recipients, to learn a little more about her connection to ALS, what receiving the scholarship means to her, and what her future plans are in healthcare.

### Image



**The Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund was established to help people who have been impacted by ALS pursue their education. What's your connection to ALS?**

My father was diagnosed in 2011 with ALS, which he battled for nearly three years before the illness took his life. As an eighth grader, the diagnosis didn't mean much, but I quickly learned what it meant to have ALS as his condition worsened. My father's ALS battle was filled with doctor's visits, prescriptions, falls, hospitalizations, late night 9-1-1 phone calls, mucus aspirations, ambulances, and I would be lying if I said it wasn't hard or almost impossible at times. But, despite the horrors, my father's hope and optimism were unwavering. Instead of running away in fear of what was to come, he took his diagnosis with great stride and grace. Although the disease took a huge toll on my family physically, mentally, and financially, looking back, it allowed me to discover my passion for medicine and has inspired me to want to give back to those in similar situations.

**60 percent of people don't know what ALS is. What do you wish people knew about the disease?**

In addition to people just knowing what ALS is, I wish people knew more about what goes into living with or having a family member with ALS. Prior to my father's diagnosis, I knew of a couple of cases within my community, but I didn't know much more than that. I wish people knew more about the day to day life that patients with ALS undergo so they can fully comprehend what it means to receive this diagnosis. The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge definitely got the disease name out there, but now it's time to create awareness for more than the name, "ALS."

**How will the Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund impact your future?**

The Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund has allowed me to pursue one of my greatest aspirations and passions: nursing. Nursing school has been my dream for many years now, so now that it is finally happening, it is very surreal. Thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, I am financially able to earn a degree in nursing that will allow me to give back to people in a field that I love, and I am eternally grateful! Thanks to the Jane Calmes ALS Scholarship Fund, I will graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with my BSN in Nursing in August 2021.

**What are you planning to study and why?**

My father's battle with ALS solidified my decision to pursue a career in nursing. As the primary caregivers at home, my family and I were responsible for helping my father with activities of daily living and essentially keeping him alive. We were constantly surrounded by nurse aides, nurses, physicians and other medical personnel, giving me a glimpse into the medical world firsthand. I have pursued my passion for nursing since my father's passing in hopes of being able to impact others the way my father's caretakers did my family. I witnessed his nurses and aides exhibit compassion, patience, understanding, kindness, and many other qualities while caring for my father, something I make a point to do with my patients. Experiencing tremendous loss at an early age has motivated me to give back to those in similar situations by choosing to study nursing. I am thrilled to be taking the next step in becoming a nurse so that I may continue to help others!

**What do you like to do when you aren't in school?**

With the demands of an accelerated nursing program, there is not much down time, however, when I'm not doing schoolwork, I love anything sports or athletics related, whether that is playing or watching. I grew up in a sports-driven household, so I like competing with others but also against myself. I enjoy exercising and bettering myself as I work towards achieving various health goals. I like to do yoga and go on walks with friends or by myself as a way to relax and de-stress. I also enjoy spending quality time with friends and family whenever I can.