

Panthera Edge Foundation

“Making A Difference, One Person At A Time”

This journey began in response to the deaths of Jim Brown and then Katherine Brown. Jan, Natalie and Alan launched a memorial scholars program that continues to grow and be a point of great pride and satisfaction. Candidly, the “Jim & Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship” has exceeded its initial objective(s). After operating as “The Jim & Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship” for a decade, we created Panthera Edge, a private family foundation in 2016. Panthera Edge extends the reach of the “Jim & Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship” geographically and opens additional horizons. The Foundation focuses on 4 key initiatives:

- **College Scholars:** The Jim and Katherine Brown Coopersville to MSU Scholarship, Kona Hawaii Scholars, and Global Scholars
- **Charity Races:** Katty Shack 5K in Grand Haven, MI
- **Charitable Donors:** GoPhilanthropic, MoreThanSport, Youth With A Mission, Haitian Health Foundation, others
- **Healthy Living:** Under Development

Natalie Kik-Brown is the Executive Director. Jan Brown & Alan Priest fill out the three-member Board of Directors. We welcome you to visit the Panthera Edge Foundation website at www.pantheraedge.org.

This inaugural issue of the newsletter provides an update on the College Scholars and a brief on our home build in Mexico. Future newsletters will highlight progress in these and other initiatives.

What We Dream

Panthera’s founders believe that developing a small army of smart, focused and influential young people will make a difference in a variety of life endeavors. The College Scholars Initiative is our wheelhouse for building this small army of like-minded movers and shakers.

Recent Activities

2016 and 2017 focused on expanding the scope and reach of Panthera Edge. Key activities included:

- **Sponsoring and participating in building a home for a family in Rosarita, Mexico** with partner's More Than Sport and Youth With A Mission (YWAM). This Charitable Donors Initiative is highlighted in this newsletter.
- **Traveling to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia with our friend Linda DeWolf, co-founder of GoPhilanthropic to visit numerous NGO's including those where Panthera Edge has sponsored programs.** We learned first-hand and up close about the challenges of developing countries. A special treat was meeting our first Global Scholar, Miss Cat Kinnaly. Miss Kinnaly attends University in Luang Prabang, studying forestry. Panthera sponsors another Global Scholar from Laos, Mr. Tee, who attends University of Lao in Vientiane and is studying IT.



Natalie Kik- Brown, Jan Brown and Alan Priest meet Miss Cat Kinnaly at the Laos Educational Opportunity Trust (LEOT) school in Luang Prabang. Miss Kinnaly asked many questions and saw how far away we lived from Laos on the world map.

- Expanding the College Scholars Initiative to Laos and Kona, Hawaii while concurrently continuing The Jim and Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship at Coopersville High School for the 9th year, details in this newsletter.
- Supporting the 8th and 9th Katty Shack 5K in Grand Haven, MI. To date, over \$85,000 has been raised for the Crime Victims Fund of Michigan.
- Launching the Panthera Edge website – www.pantheraedge.org

The College Scholars Program Continues to Build a Small Army

We welcomed 5 new scholarship winners in 2017 and expect to make 2-3 additional awards this year. We currently have 16 participants: 5 College Scholars from Kona, Hawaii, 9 recipients of The Jim and Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship and 2 Global Scholars in Laos.

The 2017 College Scholar winners are:

Majdi Mariano received a Kona Scholars award. Originally from South Africa, Majdi and his family also lived in Europe before settling in Kona. Majdi graduated from Kealakehe High School and is studying engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Math and science have always been a favorite with Majdi. He is settling in, meeting people and getting familiar with the campus and surrounding area. Majdi is an avid biker and has completed some amazing races on The Big Island.



Majdi and his mom, Yasmine Mariano, joined us for dinner in Kona in June 2017. We enjoyed hearing about their lives in other countries before settling in the United States, Majdi's bike race up Mauna Kea and his aspirations for becoming an engineer.

Alexander Nisenhoff received a Kona Scholars award. Ally graduated from West Hawaii Exploratory Academy (WHEA). She is attending The University of Chicago and studying astrophysics. She has been fascinated with physics and math since 6th grade. Ally also taught

a class on coding at a Kona Middle School while she was in high school and attended science camps on the Big Island that made a big impression on her. Jan and Alan were honored to attend the graduation ceremony at WHEA and personally make the award.



Ally, Natalie and Jan at celebration dinner with Ally and her parents, Amy Swan and Jeffrey Nisenoff, in June 2017. (Alan was the photographer.)

Elizabeth Wing-Daniels received a Kona Scholars award. She graduated from Konawaena High School and will study pre-med at Canisius College (a historical small private Jesuit

Catholic College) in Buffalo, New York, beginning her journey to be a doctor. Elizabeth is high energy and juggled part time jobs along with volunteering in school and community activities. She is already looking for a warm winter coat and boots, something she never needed in Hawaii!



Alan, Natalie and Jan met Liz, her parents, Rebekah Dima and Robert Daniels, and younger siblings for dinner at The Kona Inn to celebrate her graduation and learn about her upcoming move to New York to attend college.

Jessica Zahm received the Jim & Katherine Brown Scholarship awarded to a Coopersville graduating senior attending Michigan State University. Jessica is studying education and plans to be a teacher. Her long list of volunteer activities with children including education settings indicate that she is off to a great start.



We met Jessica, her parents, Herb and Christine Zahm, and one of her sisters for dinner in May to celebrate her graduation from Coopersville High School.

Sabrina Pike graduated from Kealakehe High School one year earlier and earned a special award from Panthera. Due to special circumstances, Sabrina's award takes place this year. Sabrina is attending Hamilton College in New York State where she is studying creative writing.



We met Sabrina for the first time last year and enjoyed catching up with her this past May as she shared her experiences as a freshman college student.

The Army Now Includes Graduates!

Now we turn our attention to those who have graduated and were immediately absorbed in professional employment, and they are impressive. These four graduates are well launched in the professional world and offer to mentor or chat with any scholarship recipient walking in the steps they previously walked.

These College Scholars are from The Jim & Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship Program at Michigan State University. All four were annual scholarship award recipients.

Eric Minch

Eric, the first Jim & Katherine Brown Scholar, graduated from Coopersville High School in Michigan and majored in International Relations at Michigan State University. Eric's eye has been set on law school since he can remember, and Panthera Edge helped make what was once a dream a reality.

After graduation from Michigan State University, our Scholars Fund stepped in to help Eric pay for a Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) preparation course. As a result, Eric's LSAT score improved greatly. MSU Law awarded Eric a 100% Full-Tuition Trustee Scholarship. Panthera continued to contribute, helping Eric stay focused on school and alleviating the stress of not having a job his first year of law school.



**Natalie, James Brown,
Eric Minch,
Jan and Alan at Eric's
MSU graduation.**

Eric has a work ethic like no other, sometimes sleeps, but always has time for his mom, girlfriend and friends. In law school, Eric clerked for a district court judge, worked with a solo practitioner, and worked at a six-attorney law firm. In July of 2016, Eric took and passed the Bar Exam for the State of Michigan. Currently, he is living in downtown Detroit as a Law Clerk for the Honorable Lita M. Popke in the Wayne County Circuit Court.

Mike Spicer

Mike Spicer was the second award winner of the Jim and Katherine Brown Scholarship, graduating from Coopersville High School prior to attending Michigan State University. Mike was also granted the Jim and Katherine Brown Scholarship each year he attended. After graduating from Michigan State in 2015 with a B.A. in Communications, combined with both a Sales and Health Promotions specialization, he immediately moved to Chicago, IL to work for a Fortune 500 sales organization.

In the two years since graduating, he has seen two promotions and now leads a team dedicated to sales, business development, and solution design.



While at Michigan State full time, Mike worked for State Farm Insurance as a licensed Insurance Producer and was also the Director of Entrance Operations for the Breslin Center, Home to Michigan State Men's and Women's

Basketball. It was through this hectic schedule the Mike quickly learned how to manage time effectively, take advantage of opportunities to sleep, and acquired the taste for coffee.

Nathan Umlor

Nathan graduated from Coopersville High School in Michigan in 2012. He graduated from Michigan State University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in Finance. No class load was too heavy for Nathan and he excelled particularly in math classes. Nathan is a Contract & Grant Administrator in the Office of Sponsored Programs at MSU. He is working towards applying to part-time Master's programs at MSU for the 2018-2019 academic year.

In addition to receiving the Jim and Katherine Brown Scholarship for 4 years, Nathan



was also awarded the Jackson National Life Insurance Company Endowed Scholarship in Business for the 2014-2015 academic year. On top of working part-time at MSU during all 4 years of his undergraduate career, he also worked for Jackson National Life Insurance Company during his senior year, ultimately deciding to accept a full-time

position at MSU a few months before graduation.

Nathan is enjoying living in East Lansing and is taking advantage of opportunities to travel. Since graduating in 2016 he has visited locations in the east, west and southern United States and is looking forward to more exploration.

Shane Snyder

Shane graduated from Michigan State in 2017 and immediately began working for Rowe Professional Services Company as a civil engineer in Flint, Michigan. While at MSU, Shane studied abroad in Australia, served the local to international community

through Engineers Without Borders, and was a Resident Assistant in Holden Hall. During his college summers, he had internships with the Michigan State Department of Transportation for three summers and the Eaton County Road Commission his final

summer. He now works as both a design and field engineer gaining experience to obtain his Professional Engineering License.



The Panthera tradition was to meet our MSU scholars at Clara's Train Station in Lansing for lunch. This picture with Shane in 2016 was the last before Clara's closing, and we have now moved the tradition to a restaurant in East Lansing.

Panthera Edge Graduates Provide Advice to Incoming Freshman – Great Guidance for Everyone!

From Eric Minch:

Eric emphasizes that incoming freshmen take advantage of all that college has to offer – step outside of your bubble; engage, be social, establish your independence, utilize the countless collegiate resources, and most importantly focus on what's most important you.

– College is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity so take full advantage of it and be sure to set yourself up for a professional career with networking and externships. There's no such thing as shaking too many hands or asking too many questions.



Eric presenting the Jim and Katherine Brown Scholarship to the 2016 awardee: Logan Panetta.

From Mike Spicer:

As advice to anyone ready to attend college, I'll say learn to be adaptable, manage your time, and experience everything! Staying organized will allow you to have it all in moderation (school, job, social, sleep...in that order). Take advantage of study groups and help centers. College is hard, make it easier on yourself and seek help where and when you need it. As a last tip, network, network, network. Your professors are typically highly regarded in their fields of study, so get in front of them and make sure they know the name accompanied by the grade!



Mike and this year's awardee of the Jim and Katherine Brown scholarship, Jessica Zahm.

From Nathan Umlor:

- Leave your dorm/apartment to study or do homework. There are too many distractions and temptations otherwise.
- Treat every class like it's the hardest class ever until you have proven otherwise.
- It's not enough to just be "smart", hard work and connections are just as (if not more) important.
- Don't worry about getting a job your first semester unless it is fun or relevant to your major.
- Study abroad while you have the chance, even if you have to take out loans.
- Freshman year is a completely fresh start, you can be whoever you want to be and you can do whatever you want to do. Choose wisely.
- Surround yourself with smart and hardworking people with goals.



Nathan enjoying the view on his recent trip out west.

From Shane Snyder:

- A college campus is a community with more diversity and resources than you can imagine. Talk to and learn from those you wouldn't normally have the opportunity to meet and explore the resources available to you.
- Explore options to study abroad early. It is easier and cheaper if you can find a program with classes you already need to take. You will have fewer options your last years.
- Use your resources. Resident assistants, professors, and advisors can always find resources that you haven't even heard of yet.
- Make sure to prioritize classes, but enjoy the events, sports, and people on or near campus.
- Ask questions from your peers, MSU staff, and graduates like me. We are all here to help.



Shane in Australia during his study abroad program.

In future Newsletters we will share some of the additional initiatives that extend beyond the scholars' program. However, we will briefly mention a Home Build that was funded by Panthera Edge for a desperate family of 5 that lost everything in a house fire. A couple photos tell this story without the need of many words.

Panthera Funded Mexico Home Build -- A House Fire and a Desperate Family In Need



Photo of home for family of five that burned and concrete foundation for the new home.



Jan Brown (Panthera Edge) & Carol Saul (Friend of Panthera Edge) in foreground with professional athletes and other volunteers all working alongside the grateful family. Over two days a new home was built and furnished.

Panthera Edge, working with More Than Sport and Youth With a Mission (YWAM) sponsored the building of a new home in Rosarita, Mexico. Panthera was the sole funding entity.

Panthera Director Jan Brown and close friend Carol Saul traveled to Rosarita, Mexico and were part of the team of 20 volunteers who built a house from the ground up over a weekend. A desperate needy family was selected through a local-touch evaluation.

When the team arrived in Rosarita, the concrete foundation was placed and the building materials for the home build were stock piled at location. As the house neared completion a shopping trip by volunteers with the family made sure the house was furnished with beds, linens, refrigerator, stove, kitchen utensils. etc. YWAM has worked with volunteers to build over 4,000 homes in Mexico.

Students, friends, and family we hope you enjoyed the inaugural issue of the Panthera Edge Newsletter. It has been quite a journey filled with fascinating people and places. We look forward to sharing updates with you on Panthera Edge's activities. If you have any questions or comments please contact Natalie @ jimnad@aol.com. In addition if you know of others that would like to receive our Newsletter, please email Natalie with their email address.