

Panthera Edge Foundation

“Making A Difference, One Person At A Time”

Welcome to the second annual Panthera Edge Newsletter. Here is a brief introduction to Panthera for our new readers.

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; and **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.

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.

Highlights of 2018

2018 has been an exciting year of growth and expansion for Panthera Edge. Highlights featured in this newsletter include:

- New scholarships in West Hawaii and Cambodia that assist pre-college students in their educational pursuits.
- Continued growth of our Michigan, Hawaii and International Scholars programs. Nine students were awarded scholarships bringing total active scholars to 18. Four students have graduated from college and are successfully building careers. We continued our partnership with Go Philanthropic as we develop our international scholars program.
- Further development of the Panthera Edge Legacy Program to provide opportunities for participation of Panthera graduates. Both Eric Minch and Mike Spicer contributed to this Newsletter.
- Continued support of Katty Shack 5K and 1 Mile Event in Grand Haven, Michigan. With proceeds from the 2018 race, \$94,000 has been raised. 2019 will be the 10th year raising funds for the Crime Victim Foundation of Michigan.
- A revisit to China after 25 years as part of our continued exploration of economies and education policy outside the United States.

New Scholarships Assist Pre-College Students

1. Dual Enrollment Scholarship, West Hawaii:

To date, Panthera focused on scholarships at the university level, beginning with the students' freshman year. Last October, we turned out attention to assisting the younger student.

Many high school students take college level courses at a community college. The credits earned are often transferrable to a four year university, potentially reducing college education costs. Tuition and books for these classes are the responsibility of the student and their family. Working with school counselors, Panthera discovered that for many students this is a serious barrier to participation. Panthera launched a Dual Enrollment Scholarship pilot in 2018. The scholarship is offered to a junior or senior high school student attending one of the six high schools in the West Hawaii area; Honoka'a, Ke Kula O Ehunuikaimalino, Kealakehe, Kohala, Konawaena, and WHEA.

The inaugural Dual Enrollment Scholarship was awarded to **Kara Nishida**, a senior at Kealakehe. She is an excellent student, very goal oriented and planning to attend a 4-year university majoring in business and apparel design. At this point Kara has already tackled many AP courses and some college classes at Hawaii Community College, Palamanui campus in Kona.

We are thrilled to have her as a Panthera Edge Scholar. In 2019 Panthera will evaluate the pilot program and future expansion.



Kara Nishida and her mom, Joann, joined us for dinner at the Kona Inn in June 2018. It was a pleasure to get to know Kara and meet her mother. We look forward to watching Kara navigate her senior year in High School with focus and gusto.

2. Free To Shine, Cambodia:

Free To Shine works with local Cambodian authorities and communities to prevent trafficking of young, rural girls by providing education and social support.

With the assistance of GoPhil, we are sponsoring a girl from a village outside of Siem Reap, Cambodia through the NGO, Free To Shine.

(An NGO, non-governmental organization, is a non-profit organization on a local, national or international level.)

Panthera is sponsoring this lovely young girl's education by providing funds to cover school costs and an appropriate support staff to keep her in school. She is 9 years old and has completed the 4th grade.



Life in the village is very tough. Families live without electricity and running water. Life can be dangerous for young girls as they can become victims of sex trafficking. However, when girls are in school they are safer from this horrific crime. By providing a scholarship, a young girl has the opportunity to attend school and focus on her studies. The scholarship provides funding to cover expenses such as uniforms & shoes, books & pens and additional classes not held during the regular school hours.

Michigan, Hawaii and Global Programs Continue to Expand – Meet the 2018 Scholars

1. Michigan Scholars – The Jim and Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship:

Panthera Edge awarded our 10th Jim and Katherine Brown Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior at Coopersville High School who will attend Michigan State University.

Chloe VanSickle loves history, government and thoroughly enjoys visiting museums. Throughout her time at Coopersville HS, she demonstrated strong leadership skills while coaching Girls on the Run, working as a teacher's assistant and participating in the robotics team as well as volleyball, basketball and cross country. Chloe learned about qualities of a good leader by reading about leaders throughout history. During the Katty Shack 5K & 1 Mile Event, Chloe generously gave her time by volunteering at the 2018 Event.

Chloe is excited and looking forward to being as a student at MSU. She will be pursuing a degree in secondary education with an emphasis in Social Studies and Spanish.



Family members, Ed & Darylene Pennington, understand the value of a college education. Ed & Darylene partnered with Panthera to provide funding for Chloe's scholarship. Ed is an MSU alumnus. We thank Ed & Darylene for their generous gift.

Nathan Umlor, 2016 MSU grad and Panthera Edge Awardee in 2012 was our representative to present the scholarship to Chloe at the Coopersville Awards Ceremony.

2. The Hawaii Scholars Program Awarded Three New Scholarships in 2018:

Mark Inouye is a graduate of **Konawena High School**. Growing up and working on his family's coffee farm provided valuable experiences for Mark. He credits the daily hard, tedious work to developing his solid character. Mark excelled in high school taking many AP courses, including AP Japanese. He was a member of the National Honors Society and an Eagle Scout. To obtain the Eagle Scout status one must complete a major project. Given the experience

gained from working on his family's coffee farm, Mark took on the renovation of the local hospital's healing garden. The project taught him much about proper cost management and efficient planning. He also participated in Judo and wrestling.

Mark is a student at Seattle University, majoring in Accounting with a minor in Environmental Studies.



Mark and his father, Ray, at the Kona Inn after enjoying a wonderful meal and even better conversation.

Evan Richards is our scholarship winner from **Kealakehe High School**. When Evan was in elementary school, Evan's parents moved the family from Oregon to Kona, Hawaii and became missionaries for the YWAM organization. Shortly after moving to Kona, Evan and his family were off on a mission trip to Tonga.

Early on Evan had heightened interest in electronics and anything in the technology arena. He taught himself coding before he was in high school. In high school he joined the Robotics and STEM teams. His Robotics team had a wonderful opportunity when they joined forces with PISCES (Pacific International Space Center for Exploration Systems), NASA and a private space organization to work on a project to improve upon an older technology used by NASA in the 1960's. This updated system will actually be tested on the moon in 2019.

Missionary work is important to Evan; and therefore, he has decided to take a gap year and do mission work in California. This coming fall he will be involved with an organization called Circuit Riders, an initiative born out of YWAM, reaching out to students on college campuses.

From left to right Evan's family: Josiah, his brother, parents, Randy & Kris, & Evan. In 2019 Evan will be attending George Fox University in Oregon, majoring in Computer Science with an emphasis in Cyber Security.



Julia Smith, the **WHEA (West Hawaii Exploratory Academy)** graduate is quite industrious with a wide range of interests. WHEA is a charter school in Kona, a lab school, focused on the

sciences and an outdoor hands-on education. Students at this school are self-driven and motivated. Her high school years were filled with numerous activities and projects. During the Dengue Fever outbreak on the Big Island, Julia was involved in a mosquito research project, studying the correlation of mosquito population densities and amount of rainfall. As a sophomore, she presented



We had dinner with Julia and her mother, Kumi, at the Kona Inn. Julia started school in early September.

the results of this research project at the Pacific Science Symposium and was given the opportunity to present at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in Honolulu.

Julia also spent time volunteering and was a mentor for GEMS, a program encouraging young girls to pursue interests and education in STEM subjects.

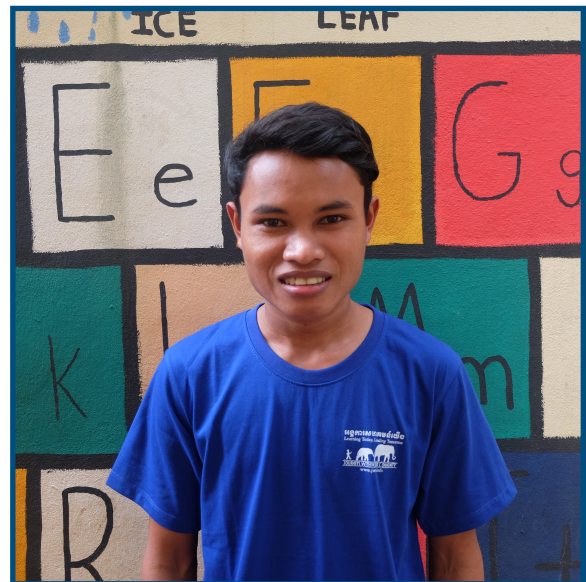
With her interests ranging from engineering and the environment to foreign and domestic policy, she has decided to major in Environmental Science and International Relations at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.

2. International Scholars:

In 2016 Panthera welcomed our first Global Scholars, two students from Laos and in 2017 expanded to Cambodia. Panthera worked with our partner Go Philanthropic and awarded a college scholarship through JWOC (Journeys

Within Our Communities). JWOC has worked in Siem Reap, Cambodia for over 10 years, providing educational opportunities such as scholarship programs, English and Technology classes for youth and adults as well as community training in basic life skills.

Panthera provides scholarships to two students in JWOC. We were introduced to our first student, **Buntha**, last fall and will be introduced to a second student in October of 2018. Buntha comes from a large family and is an IT student at the University of SE Asia. He enjoys school and is dedicated to obtaining his degree.



A picture from last fall of Buntha, our JWOC student.

Active Scholars Update

Keeping in touch with each student is an important component of Panthera's Scholar Program. In 2018 we had lunch or dinner with all but one of our US based scholars and kept in touch via email and social media. We value learning about their challenges, successes and changing viewpoints. Although we don't have the same opportunity to meet yearly with our Global

Scholars, we do keep up to date with each student. Here is a brief update on the students. We are very proud of the progress of each scholar!

1. Michigan Scholars (Jim & Katherine Brown Scholarship):

Kyle Meintsma (2013) is a senior at MSU, majoring in Forestry. Kyle spent his summer completing training requirements for the National Guard in Grayling, Michigan, and Ft. Knox, Kentucky, and managed to squeeze in some travel, including seeing forests! This summer will always be memorable; in Kentucky Kyle developed “the worse case of poison ivy that I have ever seen”.

Chandler Panetta (2014) is a senior majoring in Mechanical Engineering at MSU. He spent the summer working at a research lab in East Lansing and was impressed with how much he learned. Chandler also traveled to Las Cruces, New Mexico, with the MSU rocket team that he helped start. The team competed in Spaceport America Cup against universities from all over the world, placing 10th out of 100 teams.

Elly St. John (2015) is majoring in Professional Writing. Elly continued working for League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB), a non-profit, bicycling advocacy organization, this summer and was thrilled when the law she had been working on requiring cars to maintain a prescribed distance from bicyclists passed in the Michigan legislature and billboards announcing the law appeared throughout the state. She continues to work for LMB as the Communications Assistant her senior year.

Logan Panetta (2016) is a junior at MSU majoring in Chemical Engineering. Logan is very focused, a requirement given a demanding class schedule, on campus job and activities. Logan is working as a supervisor at the Breslin Center on campus, on the executive board for his fraternity and active in sports.

Jessica Zahm (2017) is passionate about her major in elementary education. This is her sophomore year and has added early childhood development as her minor. Over the summer Jessica took college classes and worked two jobs. Delighted to be back on campus she is also in her second year of working in the plant biology building.

2. Hawaii Scholars:

Sabrina Pike (Kona Scholar, 2016) is a junior at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York majoring in Archaeology and Creative Writing. In addition to a full class load, Sabrina has two

jobs: archaeology teaching assistant/mentor and researcher analyzing sediment samples for the archaeology department. In her “spare” time she is working on her first novel.

Majdi Mariano (Kona Scholar, 2017) is a sophomore at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, majoring in Business and already thinking about getting his MBA in Technology, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship. Majdi spent the summer at an internship in California. He learned a lot about CAD and the process of designing a large scale project. Majdi summarized the whole experience as “amazing”.

Liz Wing-Daniel (Kona Scholar, 2017) is a sophomore at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, majoring in Medical Lab Science. At dinner in Kona this summer, we laughed at the stories of her first exposure to snow and admired her gusto in trying out all things snow-related. This summer Liz worked at a grocery store in Kona (lots of overtime).

3. Global Scholars:

Mr. Tee (LEOT Scholar, 2016) is in his third year at the National University of Laos, Vientiane. He is an exceptional student working hard to earn a high GPA. Focusing on the engineering field he is taking both mechanical and electrical engineering classes.

Miss Kinnaly (LEOT Scholar, 2016) is a student at Souphanouvang University, Luang Prabang. She is in her third year and committed to the environment, majoring in Environmental Tourism. This past winter, Miss Kinnaly was accepted in a Japan-East Asia Network Student Exchange program and flew to Japan to participate in Disaster Prevention type seminars and classes.

Panthera Edge Scholarship Initiative: The Scorecard

PROGRAM	SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED	ACTIVE
Jim & Katherine BrownScholarship - MSU*	10	6
Kona Scholarships		
• Kealakehe HS	3	2
• Konawaena HS	3	2
• WHEA charter school	2	1
Dual Enrollment Scholarship - Kona	1	1
International Scholarships		
• Cambodia -Free To Shine	2	2
• Cambodia -JWOC	2	2
• Laos - LEOT	2	2
TOTAL	25	18

***At this point, Panthera has 4 graduates from the MSU scholarship program.**

The Legacy Program Provides Opportunities for Ongoing Participation of Panthera Edge Graduates

We were thrilled when Panthera Scholars were interested in supporting the work of the Foundation following graduation. While still in development, participants are already contributing in many ways:

- Eric Minch, Mike Spicer and Nathan Umlor have represented Panthera at the Coopersville Awards Ceremony in 2016, 2017 and 2018 introducing the new recipient of the Jim and Katherine Brown Scholarship. As an added benefit, the Coopersville counselors enjoy reconnecting with former students and learning of their success.

- Participating in the Scholarship Selection Committee. The committee assignment is for two years with one member rotating off each year and a new member joining. Eric Minch has served for 2 years and Mike Spicer joined in 2018. A new member will be added in 2019.
- In 2018, Ad Hoc Board Member positions were developed. Ad Hoc Board members assist the board in multiple ways through participation in events and committees, advice and guidance on current and new programs. We are pleased that Eric Minch and Mike Spicer have agreed to serve as Ad Hoc Board Members for the next two years. Both have contributed to this newsletter.

Insightful Advice From Eric Minch:

(Eric's focus and diligence while obtaining his BA and then Law degree was impressive. When he wasn't in class he was at the library and if he was not at the library he was grabbing a few hours sleep or working. He graduated with honors from MSU in 2013 and received a full scholarship from MSU's Law School. Eric is Law Clerk for the Honorable Lita M. Popke in Wayne County.)

Goals are extremely important, but they are rarely achieved through an uncharted path. Some goals are much more definite than others. For example, when I entered Michigan State roughly a decade ago, I always knew my goal was to prepare myself for law school and to eventually become an attorney. A definite, but distant, goal like that was easy to charter; I always knew the next step in achieving that goal. Yet, some goals are not so definite. For many, if not most, college is a time in which you discover your passions, realize your likes / dislikes, and decide what you want to do with your post-collegiate life. If this is the class you fall into, your path is not so clear. But, college offers so many avenues to clean up what may seem like a muddy path. Below is a discussion of a few of those avenues.

Utilize your college classes. Undoubtedly, your freshman year of college will involve certain required courses – regardless of whether you have selected a major. Use these requisites as way to discern if you have *any* interest in that subject and possibly a career. If you resent going to your economics class and receive low grades, that is an indicator that the area may not be right for you. It seems commonsensical, but I had countless classmates continue down a path they so clearly disliked. It is never too late to realize something is not right for you, especially considering that may be the something you are doing for the rest of your life. On the flip side to those required courses, take some classes on topics that you have little exposure – don't knock it

until you've tried it! Who knows, gazing up at the stars at night for an astronomy class or sifting through the local river in waders for fish samples could end up being your thing.

Get involved, intern and volunteer. Although I had a definitive college goal, I still regret how little I interned and how infrequently I volunteered. Whether or not you have a career in mind, being involved is so incredibly important. There is only so much you can see and learn in a classroom. If you want to know whether a particular job might be suitable for you, get out and do it – whether it is for class credits, for pay, or simply gratis. By getting involved, you get a true front row seat. Even something as simple as interning at a basic nine-to-five office job may show you that the office life is not the life for you. Or, maybe volunteering for a gubernatorial campaign catches your eye for a career in politics. Even if for only a day, job shadow as many careers as you can.

Don't be afraid to finish in five years. The four year college degree is turning into a myth, as many studies suggest the average college degree is obtained in five years. This does not mean that you should plan to graduate in five years by taking light semesters and being more socially involved. Instead, be cognizant going into college that you might not be finished in four years. Joining social clubs, holding a part-time job, interning, and changing majors are all college norms. Do not stay on a certain path just because it is the only one that will let you graduate with friends in four years.

Not everyone has a clear college plan going into freshman year, and that's okay. Realize that the classes you take, the activities you engage in, and the lessons along the way will all help narrow your path and lead to a more definite goal. Stay focused, stay determined, and everything will work out . . . even with distractions along the way.

Be Engaged, From Mike Spicer:

(Mike excelled in business and customer relations while at MSU. He worked at State Farm Insurance and declared at lunch with us that “clients are better off if they do business with me” and Breslin Center where he was quickly promoted and became Director of Entrance Operations & Marketing Director. He is a natural leader, Mike graduated from MSU in 2015 and is an Account Manager for C.H. Robinson.)

Successful Spartans Will...Socialize

No matter where a student chooses to pursue a higher education, simply accepting a spot in the next graduating class doesn't ensure a diploma. Key phrases you'll often hear when discussing how to be successful include, but are not limited to, "work hard," "stay organized," and "manage your time wisely." While these are all immensely important and shouldn't be underestimated, I can predict most students will hear these from their respective outlets and be provided with all the tools and resources to implement. All students should combine these cliché phrases with a strategic social network.

Network with your professors. Students spend a minimum of 120 credit hours with professors and teacher's assistants (TAs). While some of these professors may demand a rigorous work load, a vast majority of them are highly respected in their field of study and expertise. It's surprising how many students do NOT take advantage of the access to these esteemed professionals. Advocate for yourself: a strong performance in a class should be recognized. Attend office hours: establish yourself as a standout in the class and in the event you're struggling, still identify yourself as a resourceful student with a strong desire to succeed. At the end of the semester, ask for a letters of recommendation, about organizations they are involved in and how to get involved yourself, and for mentorship going forward. If a student does this once a semester, they'll end their academic career with 8 mentors, all established and with opportunities for internships, careers opportunities, or access to graduate school following graduation.

Network with other students. While this may sound like a given, too many students take their peers for granted. For example, I once invited a student that majored in Computer Science to substitute for another player on our IM Volleyball team. There he met my friend, who despite being a Biology major, had a parent that was an executive for a Fortune 500 tech company. That Computer Science major received a paid summer internship the following summer. Moral of the story, say, "Yes" to social invitations that appeal to you, even if you're stepping out of your comfort zone. Having a great GPA will open the door to numerous opportunities, but having someone unlock the door first never hurts.

Step out of your comfort zone. A college campus may be one of the most diverse environments students have been exposed to at this point in their life. While it's easiest to identify those you are most like, expose yourself to unfamiliar cultures. Doing so will only increase your emotional intelligence, your ability to converse with others, and the opportunities to effectively communicate with future professionals. Making acquaintances, or better yet friends, with colleagues with different backgrounds, will challenge your beliefs, make you question your convictions, and gain a respect for opposing viewpoints; all of which are vital for effective communication in the year 2018.

College should challenge you. After all, if a diploma was received with minimal effort, the university did not prepare the student for their perspective career. Professionals following graduation will be significantly more challenged, however will have gained the tools necessary to find answers, create solutions, and continue to push their professional boundaries. So sleep well, ask for help, and strategically socialize. The relationships that present themselves could present opportunities immediately or may come to fruition in the coming years, either way these relationships and your reputation within these groups are invaluable.



Mike Spicer (on the left) and Eric Minch(on the right) enjoyed hiking in Arizona before the MSU vs ASU football game in September.

Students, friends, and family we hope you enjoyed the second issue of the Panthera Edge Newsletter. It continues to be a fascinating journey filled with intriguing people and extraordinary places. We look forward to sharing continued updates with you on Panthera Edge's activities. If you have any questions or comments please contact Natalie @ nkikbrown@pantheraedge.org. In addition, if you know of others that would like to receive our Newsletter, please email Natalie with their email address. (September 2018)