



THE POWER OF THE

*Signature
Scholarship*



*“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto
one of the least of these my brethren,
ye have done it unto me.”*

—MATTHEW 25:40

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SIGNATURE SCHOLARSHIPS AT BYU

A Signature Scholarship at BYU offers a way for you to help students in need and to personally witness the tremendous impact you have in their lives. Three characteristics make a BYU Signature Scholarship unique:

1. Naming and Designation

A Signature Scholarship allows you to name your scholarship, whether for yourself, your organization, or a loved one. You may also designate your scholarships for a student from a particular BYU college.

2. An Annual Gathering

Each fall, Signature Scholarship donors are invited to campus to meet with scholarship recipients. This event (which may include a luncheon) gives you the opportunity to meet the students you support, hear about how the scholarship is blessing their lives, and build new friendships.

3. Affordability

Whereas named scholarships are typically reserved for large endowments, Signature Scholarships—which can be started with a donation to fund two semesters for one student—is feasible for donors in many financial situations.



Since it was created
in 2003, the Signature
Scholarship program
has uplifted hundreds
of students and created
a legacy for hundreds
of generous donors.



“

Both are edified
and rejoice together.

—Doctrine & Covenants 50:22

”

Acts of charity often bless both the giver and the receiver. That was certainly true for Signature Scholarship recipient Kiley Yates and her scholarship's sponsors, Michael and Sarah Ries.



Kiley Yates (far right) was only able to attend BYU because of the help she received from Michael and Sarah Ries (first and second from left) through the Signature Scholarship program.

THE RECEIVER

For Kiley Yates, a sophomore studying art education, art is everything. “I love painting and drawing and creating things,” she says, “and I want to share that with future students.” So when she developed juvenile idiopathic arthritis as a teenager, she was devastated. “My joints were becoming so swollen I could hardly move them. I could hardly walk. But worst of all, I could no longer do art. . . . That was a whole new kind of painful to me.”

Kiley’s bout with arthritis was just one in a series of hardships. Her dad lost his job twice, which put the family of 11 under significant financial strain. And during those periods of unemployment, three of Kiley’s siblings suffered life-threatening traumas that required expensive medical care and tested the family’s emotional fortitude.

Kiley and her family made it through their trials with faith, hard work, and “countless miraculous blessings” from Heavenly Father. And through it all, Kiley developed

an unshakable trust in God. “I knew I was in my Father in Heaven’s hands. I knew it.”

When Kiley was accepted to BYU, her tears of joy quickly turned to tears of distress. “I was terrified of how I was going to pay for college and be on my own,” Kiley says. “My mom looked at me, wiped away my tears, and simply said, ‘Trust.’ And I did. I knew that if I just kept moving forward and trusting in my Father in Heaven, everything would work out—because it always had. I didn’t know how it would, but I knew that it would.”

Kiley had a job as a lifeguard to earn money for school until she suffered a concussion that kept her from working. With college quickly approaching, she stressed out about how she would afford it. Then one day, while shopping for groceries, Kiley received an email saying she had

been awarded the Marilyn Romney Signature Scholarship. “I fell to my knees in the middle of the grocery store and started praying because I was so grateful. I prayed with all the sincerity I could muster because I had been blessed so much.”

Now, in addition to sharing her love of art with future students, Kiley has a new goal: to pay her blessings forward. The donors who made college possible for Kiley taught her that “we can all be tools in the hands of the Lord to bless people’s lives. Their lesson of charity and sacrifice to help me, just an average girl that they didn’t even know—it changed my life. And I want to carry that spirit of giving, of sharing our Father in Heaven’s light, throughout my entire life.”



“I prayed with all the sincerity I could muster because I had been blessed so much.”





THE GIVER

“One of the themes in my life has been being the recipient of other people’s generosity,” says Sarah Reis, a BYU alum who received a Signature Scholarship when she was a student. “There have been so many wonderful examples of people who have blessed my life.” And now, as a sponsor of a Signature Scholarship, Sarah is following those examples and blessing the lives of others.

“When I received my scholarship, I felt so overwhelmed and grateful,” says Sarah. “It was from some random family I didn’t know—a family with kids and other things going on in their lives—yet they still shared with me out of love. That touched my life, and I think it really enhanced my experience at BYU—knowing that I was able to be here because of someone else’s love and generosity.”

Sarah’s deep sense of gratitude inspired her to establish a Signature Scholarship of her own to start helping others. Sarah’s husband, Michael, says, “I knew as soon as I started dating Sarah that this was going to happen, but I didn’t realize

how soon she wanted to make it happen.” Within three years of graduating from BYU, Michael and Sarah established the Marilyn Romney Signature Scholarship, named in honor of Sarah’s grandmother. “It’s something we have to budget and plan for,” says Sarah. “It feels like a pinch, but it’s a good pinch. I think that’s one of the reasons why this means so much to us.”

Michael and Sarah have funded a Signature Scholarship for eight years and counting, and the most rewarding thing for them has been meeting the students during the annual Signature Scholarship event. “It’s united us with some amazing people and families,” says Sarah. “Kiley’s story is amazing, and the stories of all the recipients have been equally amazing. I feel so lucky to be a small part of their lives. I hope that they will take the opportunity, as soon as they can, to give back, because they know what it feels like to receive. And you never forget those feelings.”

“The reason I think this has lasted as long as it has for us is the meeting of the students,” adds Michael. “Each year as we get to meet the student who received the scholarship, it strengthens our faith and reminds me of a lesson I learned early in life: if I knew somebody as well as the Savior knows them, I would love them as fervently and as personally as He does. So as we get to meet these students each year, it’s all the motivation that we could possibly need to continue doing it.”



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GO TO [GIVE.BYU.EDU/SIGNATURE](https://give.byu.edu/signature) TO READ MORE STORIES OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN BLESSED THROUGH THE SIGNATURE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.



“The fact that someone who didn’t even know me had so much faith in me, the fact that she single-handedly paid for my first year—that meant the world to me. I had never had someone be so kind to me before.”

—Signature Scholarship recipient SHARON KEALM



“By the end of the semester I felt defeated. . . . I had plans to pack up my dorm and head back to Hawaii, never to return. These plans came to an abrupt halt when I received a Signature Scholarship. . . . Thank you for being the wind that moves the coconut trees. Fa’afetai tele lava (thank you very much).”

—Signature Scholarship recipient WINNIE MARKOWITZ



The annual Signature Scholarship event gives donors a chance to meet the students they support and hear about how their support is blessing students' lives.





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This publication was produced by the Philanthropies Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which encourages and facilitates philanthropic support for programs and charities affiliated with the Church, including Brigham Young University.