

2023 Rain City Flyers Scholarship Recipients

Stephen Bleakley-Harris

Stephen's RCF career spans from the ages of 7 to 17. His first season sparked an interest in running, but he didn't return to the team until he was 11. That was the season he found that he not only enjoyed running but was actually pretty fast. Stephen competed on both the RCF track and cross country teams, and went to the JO National track championships in 2016, running the 3000.

Stephen credits the RCF coaches, who helped and encouraged runners of all skill levels to find their potential, for aiding him to develop his own motivation. He competed in high school for Northwest School, where he had several top 5 state 1A meet finishes in both track and cross country. In addition to running, Stephen plays the piano and clarinet, and was a member of the Seattle Youth Symphony.

Stephen returned to Rain City as a high school junior to compete in the USATF JO Cross Country Regional meet, where he won the individual title and lead a 15-18 RCF team to the Regional team title, besting the team that took the National title that year. He will take this leadership across the finish line across the state line to Lewis and Clark College in Portland where he plans to study chemistry and run XC and track.

Anika Jones

Anika ran with Rain City for three years, learning lessons and team values that have been major contributors to her outlook on life. From observing older, more experienced RCF teammates, she learned about leadership, hard work, sportsmanship and team dynamics. Anika competed on the RCF track and cross country teams from 2017-2019, including a trip to the Junior Olympics national cross country meet in 2019.

Anika remembers feeling honored the first time a new team member reached out to her for advice and support. She has continued to share her experience and passion as a junior coach for Girls on the Run and as captain of the track and cross country teams at Nathan Hale High School. At Hale, Anika competed at the State cross country meet as well as the district track meet. She also competed on the school swim team, was on the editorial staff of the school newspaper and played the flute.

Anika is excited for the next stage of life. Her valuing of community support influenced her choice of Gonzaga for college – both academic and running. She still has her RCF singlet hanging in her closet just waiting for the right opportunity to use it. She will wear it proudly and we will be proud of her as a valued alum member of the RCF community.

Carter Joy

Running has been a part of Carter's identity for as long as he can remember. He found early success running CYO and dominated races until the 7th grade championship where he fell just short to another runner. That runner was a Rain City Flyer who that same day introduced Carter to the team. Carter competed at three JO cross country national meets with RCF. His 11-12 team was third in 2017 and he was a member of the first place 13-14 team in 2019.

Carter credits the Rain City community with opening the door of opportunity that allowed him to dream bigger, push himself harder and fall deeper in love with the sport of running. Practices fostered hard work and resilience. When the workouts became more challenging, runners used the power of the team to push individual limits further. With this attitude he excelled in high school at Seattle Preparatory Academy. At Prep Carter was a captain of the cross country and track teams. He finished his high school cross country career as a member of the Prep team that finished first at the State meet.

Within the Rain City community Carter found that he is capable of anything he approaches with a passion of enduring hard work before success is visible, by letting his mind drift, and his body settle into the familiar feeling of putting one foot in front of the other. He will take this mindset along to Santa Clara next year where he will study engineering and run both track and cross country.

Megan Kolenski

Megan remembers feeling a sense of pure belonging from the moment she first put on the Rain City uniform as a 13-14 year old. New to Seattle and from a school that did not have a robust XC program, she was concerned about joining the team. But doubts soon dissipated as she realized that all that mattered was that she demonstrated a joy of running. With that joy and hard work Megan competed at the 2019 JO National XC meet with RCF.

RCF's supportive atmosphere of warmth and encouragement became the foundation that served Megan well throughout high school at Lakeside. She was captain of the cross country and tennis teams. In addition to academics, Megan's very busy schedule also included being the school yearbook photographer, a member of the rocketry team, volunteering at the University District Food Bank and the Museum of Flight, being a student pilot, and being a steamboat engineer on the Virginia V.

Megan will carry the camaraderie and friendships discovered as a Rain City Flyer along to Duke University, where she will study mechanical engineering with a focus on aerospace engineering. She will join the Duke running club and keep the joy of running.

Maisie McManus

Maisie participated on both the RCF cross country and track teams for five years and competed in five JO Nationals XC meets. Each meet was an opportunity to bond with teammates and coaches and to learn lessons about being an athlete – being a teammate, trusting coaches, working hard, and allowing oneself grace and room to be imperfect.

In addition to academic and extracurricular activities at Holy Names Academy, Maisie continued running throughout high school and was captain of both the track and XC teams. Her high school career had its shares of highs and lows. She was part of a Holy Names team that finished second at the State XC meet in 2019. Then came Covid erasing or shortening seasons, plus her senior season lost to injury. In 2022 she had a highlight season on the track, finishing fourth at the State 3A meet in the 1600. In addition to her running pursuits, Maisie played the cello at Holy Names and was the leader of the Taylor Swift (is this because she was a fast runner?) Club.

Maisie's most memorable RCF experience was being late to the start line and not having her spikes, but getting shoes from a teammate and being encouraged to run the race. She gave it her all, finished high enough to qualify her team for Regionals, and learned to never give up! She will carry lessons learned

within RCF about determination, community and achievement on to Cornell University in New York, where she will study Human Biology, Health, and Society toward the Pre-med track and also compete in both track and cross country. Balancing both pursuits won't be easy, but as she learned from countless hours of practices and races at Woodland Park, she can do hard things! She is excited to be part of a new running community, but will never forget all she gained through Rain City.

Drew K. Oliver

Drew started with RCF as a 9-year old just to have a year-round team for practice. Over the course of 5 years with the team he trained and raced to many successes, including 4 All-American finishes at XC JO Nationals and a Team title in 2019. But what he will remember most and carry forward is the relationships and habits created while on the team.

Drew attended Bishop Blanchet HS where he competed on the cross country, track and swim teams. He was a member of the Blanchet teams that won the State XC meet in 2021 and finished second in 2022. His high school career ended on a strong note with a third place finish at the 2023 State meet in the 800, and a sixth in the 1600. Drew also competed at the state swim meet and is a nationally ranked triathlete.

Drew expresses thankfulness that he was fortunate enough to be part of the RCF team that helped him grow and set out a path that helped him realize his potential and develop a lasting love for the sport. He learned the value of consistent hard work and dedication, and to appreciate every experience you are given. Heading to Texas Christian University, Drew will continue to develop his potential, running both track and cross country for the Horned Frogs. He is excited for all this new experience might hold.

Quincy Purcell

Quincy credits Rain City Flyers with fostering a sense of confidence, building his running skills and instilling a work ethic that carried over into academics and extra-curriculars. He joined Rain City as an 11 year old track sprints participant but eventually moved on to jumps and hurdles. Quincy is the holder of team records in the 13-14 division 100 and 200 hurdles and the triple jump. Showing a broad range of ability, Quincy also competed with the RCF XC team, where he was a member of the 11-12 team that was third at the National meet in 2017, and the 13-14 team that won the National title in 2019.

With Rain City, Quincy was full of questions about how to perform the events. With curiosity came knowledge which helped him improve and increased his confidence. Quincy carried this confidence into his high school running, academics, and extra-curriculars at Roosevelt. He was Captain of the Roosevelt cross country and track teams. He continued his hurdling for the Riders, competing successfully in both the 110 and 300 hurdles. Beyond running Quincy pursued his interests in photography and drones, and was active with several engineering and technology groups. Quincy was also active as a volunteer with RARE (Roosevelt Alumni for Racial Justice) as a student ambassador, and social justice activities.

Quincy notes that Rain City taught him to keep an open mind but pursue a goal, an attitude that will propel him in the future. He will attend Case Western Reserve, studying mechanical engineering and hurdling on the track for the Spartans. Quincy sees college as an opportunity to take in his own way, through intuitions learned through Rain City. He will find a community of supportive people driven to achieve a shared goal and use struggles to grow stronger.

William Schneider

Will grew up loving all sports, but it was his time with Rain City on the trails of Woodland Park where running emerged on top. His first season with the team as an 8-year old, Will remembers idolizing the older kids and how fast they were. Watching them inspired him and sparked an interest that continues to this day. That first XC season, in the 7-8 division, Will was a JO All American at the National meet in San Antonio. It was a race that cemented running as his favorite sport. Will missed a couple of seasons while his family was in England, but he continued his running. His success continued with RCF on his return. Will was a four time XC All American and led the 11-12 boys to a third place National finish in 2017 and the 13-14 boys to the National title in 2019. On the track Will set team records in the 7-8 boys 400, 800 and 1500, but the next generation has already arrived and eclipsed those records. He still holds team records in the 13-14 boys 1500, mile and 3000.

Will took the lessons and experiences of running with Rain City to high school at Bishop Blanchet. There he had a stellar high school track and cross country career, with too many accomplishments to try to list. In 2021 Will was the individual State XC champ and Blanchet the team winner. In 2022 Will won the State 3A 1600 and 3200. His high school PR's were 4:07 and 8:50. He excelled in the classroom and was a nominee for the Thenell Scholar Athlete Award, recognizing a student athlete's commitment to giving one's best both in the classroom and in athletics.

Fall 2023 will find Will attending the University of Washington to study business and compete on the Huskies' cross country and track teams. The Rain City community will be able to continue cheering their support for Will, who knows he is a Rain City Flyer for life!

Manthita Wague

Manthita came up to Rain City through the Greenlake Community Center track and field program, where she tried all events. She eventually bonded well with jumping, learning the phases and developing a passion for running down the runway and flying as far as possible. With Rain City, Manthita excelled in the long jump at the JO meets. She remembers finding her mark – 96 feet - the distance from the board. She wrote the mark on her arm, on homework assignments and on her bedroom wall. She didn't want to forget it when she went to the JO meet.

Manthita took her RCF-96 mark along to high school at Ingraham, considering it her lucky mark and using it for confidence after an unsuccessful series. She continued that jumping excellence, winning the State meet long jump in 2023, and finishing second in the triple jump in both 2022 and 2023. She was captain of the school track team in 2022 and 2023. Off the track she was Senior Class vice president and president of the Muslim Student Association. Among her many volunteer activities were serving as a King County Youth Bill of Rights mentor, a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation mentor and a science camp intern.

Manthita has a running start on college with credits earned at North Seattle College. She will attend UW or Seattle U and plans to major in Medicine/Biology with the goal of med school. She also hopes to continue jumping at the collegiate level. She has learned the balance it takes to achieve both in the classroom and on the field. She will continue to push herself as hard as she can, find her mark, and fly down life's runway to new adventures.