

Be Like Austin Scholarship

Application for 2025-2026

Scholarships for Young Adults

Pursuing Vocational Careers

Austin Stanek passed away unexpectedly on September 27, 2024 as the result of a hit-and-run drunk driver. He was just shy of his 25th birthday. Austin was athletic to his core - he loved all sports throughout high school and after graduating from Wauconda High School in 2018 he dove straight into sand volleyball and golf as his favorite time spent outside of work. He loved the competition, but more than that, he loved the people. Austin had a knack for bringing others together, whether they were teammates or just friends hanging out. Austin's easygoing nature made everyone feel welcome and it was impossible to be around him without feeling his positive energy. Austin had an amazing ability to connect with anyone. He could easily strike up a conversation and within minutes gain a new friend. His smile and energy could light up any room!

With parents who spent several years in college and earned multiple degrees, he was always encouraged to go to college to find his career path. Austin was insistent that you can be successful right out of high school and not necessarily follow a college path. Austin was passionate about his decision to not continue his education after high school and find his way.

Austin - we are proud to say you were right!

After graduating from Wauconda High School in 2018, Austin entered the workforce and pursued a career that would be meaningful to him. It did not take long for Austin to become a dedicated and loyal part of D'Ascanio Custom, where he worked alongside his cousin, friend, and mentor, Mark. Together they took pride in their work and were a successful team in designing and remodeling homes. He loved being on-site, chatting with clients and being part of a team that put their heart into their work.

Not only was Austin's career path influenced by his cousin, Mark, but also by his older brother, Paul, who is a dedicated firefighter. Austin always admired Paul's hard work and unwavering sense of duty to serve and care for others, just as he had done while they were growing up together. Austin was always proud of his older brother and even more so as he watched him grow his career with the Fire Department.

For these reasons, we have created the **Be Like Austin Scholarship** in honor of our son, Austin. It is designed to help young adults like Austin - outgoing, energetic men and women pursuing a productive and successful career in the *vocational trades*, including first responders, law enforcement and healthcare workers! Scholarship funds are intended to support education and training needs in conjunction with vocational requirements.

Our goal is to support and inspire other young adults to *Be Like Austin* - love life, love people and love your career!

~ Paul and Carrie Stanek

Scholarship Application Details

To be considered for the scholarship, young adults must:

1. Be between 17-30 years of age.
2. Be pursuing a career in vocational trades.
3. Be in good standing in all areas of life, including home, work and school.
4. Submit the **Application Packet** as described below to: belikeaustin25@gmail.com with subject line: BE LIKE AUSTIN SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION.

The Application Packet consists of THREE pages:

PAGE 1: Cover Page – Introduction, including:

- Name and Age
- Phone Number
- Address
- Email Address
- Education Level
- Career Goal

PAGE 2: Applicant Essay – Description of your reasons for applying for the scholarship and must include the answer to the following:

- What inspired your career goals?
- What brings you joy with your career choice?
- What makes you the best candidate for the Be Like Austin Scholarship?
- What obstacles are you currently facing in achieving your career goal?

PAGE 3: Letter of Endorsement: 1 professional letter of endorsement from someone who supports you in the pursuit of the Be Like Austin Scholarship, as well as your career.

Selection Process:

- Application Deadline:
 - **November 30, 2025** for January 2026 Award.
 - **March 1, 2026** for April 2026 Award.
- The Scholarship Recipient will be awarded up to \$2500 to support his/her pursuit of a vocational career.
- Scholarship Applications will be reviewed by Paul and Carrie Stanek, along with other members of the Be Like Austin nonprofit organization to ensure all criteria for the Application Packet are met.
- The Scholarship Recipient will be contacted directly by Paul and Carrie Stanek and invited to the next *Be Like Austin* fundraising event for recognition and celebration!