Peters Township Education Foundation

Matthew Cheran Scholarship Application

The Peters Township Education Foundation will grant one scholarship each spring to a graduating senior of the Peters Township High School in the amount of $500 in honor of Matthew Cheran. A beloved teacher at Peters Township Middle School, Mr. Cheran served as the President of the PTEF for more than 12 years. Upon his retirement, the scholarship was initiated in his honor to assist students with post-graduation pursuits who show strong moral character, positive attitude and dedication to their school.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name: [redacted]

Address: [redacted]

Phone Number: [redacted] Email: [redacted]

Post graduate plans (college, technical school, military, other – if attending a school please include the name and your intended major). Boston College - Nursing

Applicant Signature: [redacted]

Parent/Guardian signature: [redacted]

Two teacher/faculty/guidance counselor signatures are required and may be contacted by the scholarship committee for a verbal confirmation of reference. *No letter of recommendation is needed.*

Teacher/Faculty reference signature: Sarah Paterno Printed name Sarah Paterno

Teacher/Faculty reference signature: Courtney Wolf Printed name Courtney Wolf

ESSAY PROMPTS: PLEASE SELECT ONE

Integrity and Ethics: Describe a situation where you were faced with a moral dilemma. How did you navigate through it? What principles guided your decision-making process?

Resilience and Perseverance: Share a significant challenge or setback you encountered in your academic or personal life. How did you overcome it, and what did you learn from the experience?

Empathy and Compassion: Discuss an instance where you demonstrated empathy towards others, particularly in a difficult situation. How did your actions impact those involved, and what did you gain from the experience?

Leadership and Service: Reflect on a time when you took on a leadership role to initiate positive change within your community or organization. What motivated you to lead, and what outcomes did you achieve?

ESSAY GUIDELINES: Each essay should be 500-700 words in length. Demonstration of good character traits such as integrity, resilience, empathy, and leadership as well as clarity and coherence of writing will be taken into consideration by the scholarship committee. Use clear and concise language, providing specific examples to support your points. Ensure your essay is well-structured, and proofread carefully. We look forward to reviewing your scholarship application.

Please submit your application along with the essay in electronic form to belchers@pt-sd.org by April 10, 2026. Paper copies may alternately be submitted to the District Administration Office at 631 East McMurray Road, McMurray PA 15317.

Late submissions will not be considered. Winners will be announced at the District's Senior Awards Assembly.

Swimming has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember, and it was the first time I fell in love with a sport. I swam competitively for ten seasons, filled with many ups and downs. My club underwent several coaching changes, which led to uncertainty and a lack of confidence. While I had coaches who continually cheered me on, others didn't believe in me. I almost quit after a rough freshman season, but one day I stayed after practice to help my friend coach a group of beginner swimmers. I fell in love with it and knew from that moment that I wanted to be a coach. Although this was a big responsibility, I decided that the difference I was going to make was worth it. I wanted to be the coach I never had.

After that day, I started coaching our summer league team, Stingrays, during its first season. Growing up, I always looked up to the high schoolers who helped coach our team and knew that athletes needed role models like them. Therefore, I made the effort during practice to talk with the swimmers, learning about their different interests. During meets, I demonstrated good sportsmanship by cheering for each of them. Through these actions, I created a safe and encouraging environment and made them excited about swimming. As a result, many of these kids fell in love with swimming and decided to join our club team. I also chose to coach during the school year, continuing to make an impact on our club team.

During the school year, we were able to work on harder swim concepts, like breaststroke and butterfly. I took the opportunity to give them even more feedback and even developed some simple practices and drills to help them. They were growing into stronger and better swimmers, but that also meant that they were getting frustrated. Club swimming is more serious than summer league, and some kids were picking it up faster than others. Therefore, I took the time to remind them that I was proud of them, no matter what the time on the clock said. Additionally, I

got into the pool to demonstrate proper technique for all four strokes and continued to give feedback in a kid-friendly way that they would understand. During these hard times, I formed even stronger bonds with them and was able to gain their trust, something I didn't always experience as a swimmer.

These relationships continued to grow, and I even got to support some kids outside of the pool. I saw this the most with a sixth grader who I call my "mini-me." Just like me, she's very passionate and hardworking, but this also leads to her being frustrated with herself. By understanding what she's going through, I've supported her during her highs and lows. At one meet, she was disqualified on her backstroke turn and was upset that no one had told her previously that it was a disqualification. So, I stepped in and told her about a time I got disqualified for the same thing and reminded her I was still proud of her. After we talked, she calmed down and was determined to try again, ready to apply her new knowledge to her next race. Over time, she's learned to trust herself, and our relationship has grown as a result. While this is just one example of my relationships with my swimmers, each and every one holds a special place in my heart.

Through my actions as a coach, I've helped to shape an environment that I never got to experience. I have shown them that you don't have to be the next Katie Ledecky to be a valued teammate. While scoring points is important, it is how we support each other that truly makes a difference. As a coach, I've been able to do so much more than teach a life-saving skill. My leadership has allowed me to shape confident and caring individuals within my community who know that I'll always be cheering for them.