

Application Deadline:
Friday, April 17, 2026, 3:00 pm



Scholarship Program

2025-2026

INSTRUCTIONS and APPLICATION

for the

James R. Ryan Family Foundation

Middle School Scholarship

Comstock Public Schools Foundation
5455 Gull Road, Ste. D #171 Kalamazoo, MI 49048-7654

www.comstockpsfoundation.org

**Comstock Public Schools Foundation
2025 - 2026 Scholarship Program**

James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship

HISTORY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The James Raymond Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship was initiated in 2004 by Dr. James R. Ryan (1936-2006). Dr. James R. Ryan, uncle of Dr. Tom Ryan and Deb (Dunham) Ryan, both former graduates of Comstock High School, was a highly respected Orthopedic Oncology expert. He practiced in Detroit and Kalamazoo and, in later years, made his home in the Gull Lake Community. Dr. Ryan demonstrated a dedication to education throughout his entire life and his generous gift will assist future students in their efforts to realize their academic potential.

This annual scholarship, of up to \$10,000 per year, is renewable over a four-year period, to a maximum of \$40,000 (for recipients selected beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year). The scholarship is offered to Comstock Middle School and Comstock STEM Academy eighth grade students who have demonstrated potential for academic success in preparation for college attendance. The applicants must demonstrate financial need.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who can apply? CRITERIA TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP:

The applicant must be a Comstock eighth grade student, and resident of the Comstock Public School District, who is planning to enroll in an accredited four-year college or university, as a full-time student, after graduation from Comstock High School. Enrollment in college must occur in the fall immediately following the applicant's high school graduation.

The applicant must have attained a minimum of a 2.5 cumulative GPA at the end of the second marking period of eighth grade. If awarded the scholarship, the recipient's cumulative GPA through completion of eighth grade must not fall below 2.5 or the applicant's scholarship eligibility will be permanently revoked and will be given to the designated alternate.

The applicant's family must demonstrate financial need. Financial need questions which may be considered include:

- ✓ Does the applicant qualify for free or reduced lunch?
- ✓ Does the family income fall below the median family income in Michigan?
- ✓ Would the applicant be a first-generation college student (parents did not attain a college degree)?
- ✓ Does the applicant have a disabled parent or sibling, (which may put more financial burden on an otherwise middle class family)?
- ✓ Does the applicant have a parent in the military?

The applicant must demonstrate good citizenship, high moral character, and a good work ethic prior to and throughout the period of the scholarship.

CRITERIA FOR CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY IN HIGH SCHOOL:

If awarded the scholarship, the recipient must continue to attend Comstock Public Schools, reside in the Comstock Public School District, and graduate from Comstock High School. During high school, the recipient must have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of their freshman year of high school and every marking period thereafter, or the recipient's scholarship eligibility will be permanently revoked and will be given to the designated alternate.

CRITERIA FOR CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY IN COLLEGE:

For the scholarship to be renewed while attending college, the recipient must maintain a 2.5 annual GPA as a full-time college student with each semester (or marking period) grades sent to the Comstock Public Schools Foundation by the student as soon as they are available.

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James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship

Application deadline: Friday, April 17, 2026, 3:00 pm

Completed applications must be turned in to the Comstock Middle School or Comstock STEM Office.

Please read **ALL DIRECTIONS** carefully before filling out your application.

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION

- Complete the Application Form. ***Please print neatly using dark blue or black ink.***
- Your parent or legal guardian should complete the Financial Information Form.
- Give the Teacher Evaluation Forms to your 8th grade teachers ***at least 2 weeks before the application deadline.*** The teachers will turn in the forms ***directly*** to the Comstock Middle School or Comstock STEM Academy Guidance Office. ***Be sure to thank your teachers.*** Each of these teachers must complete the form labeled for their class:
 - ✓ Language Arts
 - ✓ Mathematics
 - ✓ Science
 - ✓ Social Studies
- Ask an adult who knows you well to write a letter of recommendation ***at least 2 weeks before the application deadline.*** This person should not be a relative or a Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy employee. Give the person writing your recommendation the Scholarship Letter of Recommendation Instructions and be sure that person includes it with his/her letter of recommendation. Collect the sealed envelope with the instructions and letter of recommendation and turn in the letter in the sealed envelope with your application. ***Be sure to thank this person for writing you a letter of recommendation.***
- Write an essay covering all of the following topics:
 - ✓ A brief description about the career for which you would like to study and the career training you are planning to pursue;
 - ✓ A brief description about your interests, activities and your best abilities;
 - ✓ Any information that would assist the selection committee in understanding your need for financial assistance;
 - ✓ A brief statement about why you deserve this scholarship.

COMPLETED APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please staple the required pieces of your application together in this order:

1. Completed Scholarship Application
2. Completed Financial Information Form
3. Sealed envelope containing the letter of recommendation
4. Your personal essay

Please do not include any additional materials.

QUESTIONS? Please ask Mrs. Spada (STEM Academy) or Mr. Wilke (Comstock Middle School)

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Scholarship Application

This form must be completed by the student applicant.

Please print neatly, using dark blue or black ink.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

First, Middle, and Last Name _____

Permanent StreetAddress _____

City, State ZIP _____

Email address _____

Telephone Number _____ Year of High School Graduation _____

FAMILY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Father or Guardian _____

Street Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

Email address _____

Home telephone number _____

Cell telephone number _____

Name of Mother or Guardian _____

Street Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

Email address _____

Home telephone number _____

Cell telephone number _____

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Use the space below to describe your activities, leadership roles, community service, and responsibilities at school, in the community, and at home. Use full names (not abbreviations).

Use your essay to describe additional information and details about yourself.

ACTIVITIES (Clubs, Sports, Band, Performing Arts, Church, Community Volunteering, etc.)

Type of Activity	Sponsor of the Activity	# of years of Involvement	Leadership roles or recognition

WORK EXPERIENCE (paid or unpaid)

Employer	Responsibilities	Dates of Employment	Hours worked

CERTIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION

- I hereby affirm that the information provided on this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- I/we authorize the Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy to provide a copy of my middle school transcript and GPA to the Ryan Scholarship Selection Committee and the Comstock Public Schools Foundation.

Signature of student applicant Date

Signature of parent or guardian Date

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Family Financial Information

*This form must be completed by the student's parent or legal guardian.
Please print neatly and use dark blue or black ink.*

The applicant and family must demonstrate financial need.

STUDENT APPLICANT NAME _____

PARENT or GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Name of father or guardian _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____

Highest level of education _____

What was the father's (or guardian's), or the jointly filed **Adjusted Gross Income** from your tax form for **2025**?

Parents of scholarship finalists will be asked to submit copies of their tax forms for verification.

Name of mother or guardian _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____

Highest level of education _____

If filed separately, what was the mother's (or guardian's) **Adjusted Gross Income** from your tax form for **2025**?

Parents of scholarship finalists will be asked to submit copies of their tax forms for verification.

Does the applicant live in a single-parent or guardian household? (yes or no) _____

If so, name of Custodial Parent/Guardian _____

Total number of adults in applicant's primary home _____

Ages of children living at home _____

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Evaluation Form: **8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT

Please fill in your name and give this form to your 8th grade Language Arts teacher **at least 2 weeks before the application deadline of Friday, April 17, 2026**. Your teacher will turn this form into the CMS/STEM Office directly.

Student Name _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEACHER

The student named above is applying for the James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship. Your evaluation of this student is an important element of our application process. Your comments will be kept confidential. **Please turn this form into the Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy office before Friday, April 17, 2026.**

Please do not return this form to the student.

Thank you for your involvement in the Ryan Scholarship application process. We are grateful for your assistance.

Please rank the student on the following traits in comparison with other students you have taught.

Mark your ranking by checking the appropriate box for each trait.

TRAIT	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Academic achievement				
Intellectual ability				
Independence, initiative				
Work habits, study skills				
Sense of responsibility				
Self confidence				
Leadership				
Integrity				
Interpersonal communication				

This student is recommended for the Ryan Scholarship: (Please check one.)

- ☐ Enthusiastically
☐ With confidence
☐ Recommended
☐ Recommended with reservation
☐ Not recommended

What are the first words (one or two) that come to mind to describe this student: _____

Teacher Name (printed) Signature Date _____

If you would like to add comments, please use the reverse side of this form.

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Evaluation Form: **8TH GRADE MATHEMATICS TEACHER**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT

Please fill in your name and give this form to your 8th grade Mathematics teacher **at least 2 weeks before the application deadline of Friday, April 17, 2026.** Your teacher will turn this form into the CMS/STEM Office directly.

Student Name _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEACHER

The student named above is applying for the James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship. Your evaluation of this student is an important element of our application process. Your comments will be kept confidential. **Please turn this form into the Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy office before Friday, April 17, 2026.**

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Thank you for your involvement in the Ryan Scholarship application process. We are grateful for your assistance.

Please rank the student on the following traits in comparison with other students you have taught.

Mark your ranking by checking the appropriate box for each trait.

TRAIT	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Academic achievement				
Intellectual ability				
Independence, initiative				
Work habits, study skills				
Sense of responsibility				
Self confidence				
Leadership				
Integrity				
Interpersonal communication				

This student is recommended for the Ryan Scholarship: (Please check one.)

- ☐ Enthusiastically
☐ With confidence
☐ Recommended
☐ Recommended with reservation
☐ Not recommended

What are the first words (one or two) that come to mind to describe this student: _____

Teacher Name (printed) Signature Date

If you would like to add comments, please use the reverse side of this form.

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Evaluation Form: **8TH GRADE SCIENCE TEACHER**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT

Please fill in your name and give this form to your 8th grade Science teacher **at least 2 weeks before the application deadline of Friday, April 17, 2026**. Your teacher will turn this form into the CMS/STEM Office directly.

Student Name _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEACHER

The student named above is applying for the James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship. Your evaluation of this student is an important element of our application process. Your comments will be kept confidential. **Please turn this form into the Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy office before Friday, April 17, 2026.**

Please do not return this form to the student.

Thank you for your involvement in the Ryan Scholarship application process. We are grateful for your assistance.

Please rank the student on the following traits in comparison with other students you have taught.

Mark your ranking by checking the appropriate box for each trait.

TRAIT	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Academic achievement				
Intellectual ability				
Independence, initiative				
Work habits, study skills				
Sense of responsibility				
Self confidence				
Leadership				
Integrity				
Interpersonal communication				

This student is recommended for the Ryan Scholarship: (Please check one.)

- ☐ Enthusiastically
☐ With confidence
☐ Recommended
☐ Recommended with reservation
☐ Not recommended

What are the first words (one or two) that come to mind to describe this student: _____

Teacher Name (printed) Signature Date

If you would like to add comments, please use the reverse side of this form.

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Evaluation Form: **8TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT

Please fill in your name and give this form to your 8th grade Social Studies teacher **at least 2 weeks before the application deadline of Friday, April 17, 2026**. Your teacher will turn this form into the CMS/STEM Office directly.

Student Name _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEACHER

The student named above is applying for the James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship. Your evaluation of this student is an important element of our application process. Your comments will be kept confidential. **Please turn this form into the Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy office before Friday, April 17, 2026.**

Do not return this form to the student.

Thank you for your involvement in the Ryan Scholarship application process. We are grateful for your assistance.

Please rank the student on the following traits in comparison with other students you have taught.

Mark your ranking by checking the appropriate box for each trait.

TRAIT	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Academic achievement				
Intellectual ability				
Independence, initiative				
Work habits, study skills				
Sense of responsibility				
Self confidence				
Leadership				
Integrity				
Interpersonal communication				

This student is recommended for the Ryan Scholarship: (Please check one.)

- ☐ Enthusiastically
☐ With confidence
☐ Recommended
☐ Recommended with reservation
☐ Not recommended

What are the first words (one or two) that come to mind to describe this student: _____

Teacher Name (printed) Signature Date

If you would like to add comments, please use the reverse side of this form.

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Instructions for the Letter of Recommendation

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT

- ☐ Fill in your name and give these instructions to an adult who knows you well, but who is not a relative or Comstock Middle School/STEM Academy employee **at least 2 weeks before the application deadline of Friday, April 17, 2026.**
- ☐ ***Be sure to thank the person writing your letter of recommendation.***
- ☐ Collect the sealed envelope with the letter of recommendation inside and turn it in **with your application.**

Student Name (printed)

Date

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL WRITING THE RECOMMENDATION

The student named on this form is applying for the Ryan Scholarship and has asked you to provide the Ryan Scholarship selection committee with any information you feel would be helpful in reviewing his or her application. You may be assured that the information will be considered confidential.

The Ryan Scholarship is awarded to a Comstock 8th grade student for up to \$10,000 per year, renewable over a four-year period, to a maximum of \$40,000. The applicant should show academic potential (with a 2.5 GPA or higher), **demonstrate financial need**, and demonstrate a potential for continued success. The recipient must meet academic criteria in high school, continue to reside in the Comstock Public School District, graduate from Comstock High School, and meet academic criteria in college for continued eligibility.

If you are unable to provide a letter of recommendation, please let the student know so he or she can ask another individual.

When writing the letter of recommendation, please do the following:

- ☐ Please incorporate the following in your letter of recommendation:
 - ✓ Compare this middle school student to others you have known.
 - ✓ Describe the characteristics and qualities you feel set this student apart.
 - ✓ Describe any special circumstances you feel are relevant.
- ☐ Please describe how you know the student and sign the letter.
- ☐ Return the letter in a sealed envelope **to the student before the April 17, 2026 deadline.** The student must include the letter of recommendation with his or her application.

**Additional information about the Comstock Public Schools Foundation
and the James R. Ryan Family Foundation Middle School Scholarship
may be found at www.comstockpsfoundation.org**