



Stanislaus
Community
Foundation

Melinda Nielsen Sousa Scholarship Fund

Charitable Giving Profile



Fund Purpose

The Melinda Nielsen Sousa Scholarship Fund is available to Gregori High School seniors and current college students who are residents of Stanislaus County and meet the following criteria:

1. Current senior or graduate of Gregori High School
2. Have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher

Award Amount

The award, which ranges from \$1,000 to \$2,500 will be allocated to one student per year, directly to the educational institution they are attending. The award will be issued as a one-time scholarship.

Selection

The Stanislaus Community Foundation Scholarship Committee will select at least one recipient annually; based on the scholarship criteria.

How to Apply/Deadlines

Submit a complete application package through Stanislaus Community Foundation's online application portal and upload all required materials, including transcripts, narrative and demographic information.

Please visit www.StanislausCF.org to obtain additional information about this year's application deadline and to submit the final application. For questions, please contact our office at (209) 576-1608 or email mali@StanislausCF.org.

About Melinda Nielsen Sousa

Melinda Nielsen Sousa was only 38 years old and a teacher in the English Department at Gregori High School at the time of her death. She had endured Ulcerative Colitis for almost 20 years. This horrible disease ultimately led to an aggressive form of cancer, which was discovered in September 2013, one month into the new school year. She was never able to return to class and passed away on March 7, 2014 after fighting a short, but courageous battle. After spending only one full year at Gregori, she left a lasting impression on all those who were fortunate to be her students.

She was a native of Modesto, the daughter of Tom and Annette Nielsen and the sister of Eric Nielsen and Megan Nielsen Maker. She was the wife and loving companion of Jon Sousa, who she had met while they both taught at Johansen High. Melinda graduated from Beyer High, where she was a cheerleader as well as a member of the Speech Team, ultimately receiving honors at both State and National Speech competitions. She attended MJC, being accepted into their Honors Program. She then transferred to and graduated from UC Davis; followed by obtaining her teaching credential. She immediately began her career, with Modesto City Schools, as an English instructor at Johansen. She transferred to Gregori in 2012 to continue with her passion of teaching AP English to sophomore and junior class students. Her teaching career lasted 15 short years.

Melinda was a passionate teacher who personally connected with students in an authentic and transformative way. Considered by many to be their "all-time favorite," in Melinda's classes students received an education beyond the rigorous pages of literature and learned how to use writing for self-discovery and growth.

Melinda lived life to the fullest and her *Carpe diem* approach to life was contagious; an ethos that will live on through her many students, friends and family.