



# The Last Best Ride

## Barbara Mansfield Champion Scholar Award

### About the Scholar Award

The Barbara Mansfield Champion Scholar Award was established in 2021 by Jess Cerra, a Whitefish, Montana local. Jess relied on scholarships offered by neighborhood businesses and community organizations to fund her college education. Barbara Mansfield, the Whitefish High School guidance counselor of 44 years and namesake of this scholar award, provided Jess with sound advice and significant encouragement as she worked through the college and financial aid application process. With hard work and the support of Mrs. Mansfield, Jess secured the funding that would allow her to attend the University of Montana and graduate Magna Cum Laude.

Today, Jess is an experienced small business owner, chef and culinary medicine educator, and professional cyclist. Establishing this scholar award is her way of returning support to the community that helped her achieve her educational goals and find a career.

The Barbara Mansfield Champion Scholar Award is funded through proceeds generated by [The Last Best Ride](#), a premier gravel bike race held in Whitefish, Montana founded by Jess and her husband, Sam Boardman. Each year, a large portion of the race proceeds are dedicated to funding scholar awards for financially qualified women from towns in the Flathead Valley who are pursuing post-secondary education. A minimum of two scholar awards are designated for women who identify as Black, Indigenous or as a woman of color. The award for each recipient will be \$2,500. Scholar award funds are intended to help cover costs of tuition, books, room and board, and instructional supplies.

### How to Apply

The Barbara Mansfield Champion Scholar Award is currently accepting applications. **The deadline for submitting applications is March 15.** The winning recipients will be notified in May. Disbursements will be paid directly to the educational institution that the student plans to attend.

### **Qualifications:**

To qualify for this scholar award, you must:

- Be a woman who is completing high school at Whitefish, Glacier, or another designated Flathead Valley high school; two scholar awards will be reserved for women who are Black, Indigenous, or a woman of color
- Be pursuing further education and enrolling full-time in a college, university or trade school starting in the fall
- Must demonstrate financial need based on your FAFSA results
- Have a minimum 3.2 GPA
- Have attended or graduated from public high school

\*There is no age restriction on applicants.\*

### **The Application:**

The application for the Barbara Mansfield Champion Scholar Award has two parts: the application form and a personal statement (described on the following page). The PDF application is electronically editable; however, it can also be printed and filled in by hand. The personal statement must be typed or submitted as a video. To be considered for the scholar award, the application form and the personal statement need to be submitted to [tlbrchampionscholar@gmail.com](mailto:tlbrchampionscholar@gmail.com) by the **March 15th deadline**. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.



# The Last Best Ride

## ***The personal statement:***

Barbara Mansfield is a champion educator who pushed students to discover and develop their passions, skills, and academic potential throughout her career.

The Barbara Mansfield Champion Scholar Award recognizes that champions come in many shapes and forms, including but not limited to athletic champions, champions for equal rights, champions of the arts or the environment. But no matter the cause, every champion has similar characteristics: courage, passion, strength, and persistence. Those qualities are not always innate. Champions can develop those characteristics as they overcome challenges and work to achieve goals.

**Prompt:** Please craft a personal statement that describes a time when you overcame a significant challenge or set a significant goal and achieved it. What skills or qualities did you use to overcome that challenge or to achieve that goal? How do you think your story embodies being a champion?

## **You can submit your response in either a written or video format:**

- Written personal statement: Please keep your responses to **400-600 words in length**. Submissions should be typed and will be evaluated on the quality of the response, as well as spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Video personal statement: Please keep your responses to **3-5 minutes in length**. Submissions will be evaluated on the quality of the response, including public speaking skills and clarity of communication. Videos should be submitted in a MP4 format.

**Additional, but not required:** Some students have a background, talent, interest, or way they personally identify that's important to them or their identity. They don't feel their application would be complete without it. If this sounds like you, please share as an addition to your personal statement (100 words for written option or 1 minute for video option).

## **How to Submit the Application**

Completed applications should be submitted via a single email containing the application form and personal statement (written or video) to **tlbrchampionscholar@gmail.com**. Applications will be accepted until **11:59 p.m. PT on March 15th**. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Any questions on the application or essay can also be submitted to the same email address. We will respond to your question as soon as possible.

## **Application Evaluation**

A diverse group of professionals will evaluate all applications. Applications will be reviewed by late April, and a decision on the scholar award recipients will be made in early May. Disbursements will be paid directly to the educational institution that the student plans to attend in the fall.