

Dear ASF Community,

Last December, I received the news that I was one of the recipients of the Paul Silver Award. I felt very honored and humbled that I could receive such an award. Paul Silver and Ryan Landwehr are inspirations to me, to read their stories and relate to their lives helps me to focus on the “fun” in life and the adventures that are yet to come.

The reason I applied for the award was to update my now four year old lap top since it was on it's last leg and also to help my parents with the never ending college expenses. A month before I received the call for the Silver Award my computer went dead and I had to do something quickly, luckily when I took it to the Apple Store on K-States Campus they were able to fix it for a very minimal charge, they even added a new key board. It sure helped to have Apple Care. Since my computer was now in better working order than it had been for at least a year, I was able to help pay for my second semester tuition ultimately helping my parents with my college expenses. I realize that education is my key to a career that I love, and a better life, so right now my focus is to do as well as I can in college and find an area that interests and encourages me to reach my goals. I'm certainly not going to let Alports get in my way.

I think the real story in winning the Paul Silver Award was not the award it's self but the doors it has opened up since I received it. The Olson family read my story in the ASF newsletter and contacted me at K-State. The Olson's live in Manhattan Kansas about a mile away from my dorm. My parents use to search everywhere for information on Alports and now I have this amazingly supportive family living a mile down the road. The Olson's have two great boys Jake and Brett who also have Alports. Terri and Steve took me out for dinner and the boys and I immediately connected. We have since gotten our families together and shared stories about our Alports experiences. As I head back to Manhattan in the fall for my junior year, I hope to offer my support and encouragement to the Olson's and to be an inspiration to them as Paul and Ryan and the whole ASF community is for me.

Thank you again for believing in, and honoring me with the Paul Silver Award this past year. I appreciate all of your support.

Conner Cooper