

# The *Shannon Edwards* *Memorial Fund*



The Shannon Edwards Memorial Fund was created as a means of perpetuating the memory of Shannon Edwards' short life while placing emphasis on the programs that Shannon enjoyed. Shannon's parents, Daryl and Karen Edwards, requested this fund be established to support educational programs that draw out the best in students. It is their hope that this fund will foster programs that go above and beyond everyday curriculum so that creativity in all students is encouraged. Also, Shannon's parents wish to encourage the kind of support that made a difference in her life including:

- Early intervention
- Supportive Principals
- Physical Education Teachers
- Gifted Programs that allow students to excel according to their own strengths
- Special Education Programs that foster the dignity and self-worth of students

The North Ridgeville Schools Endowment Funds trustees, in collaboration with Shannon's parents, will select grantees to receive support from this Fund. Grants selection criteria for this Fund can be found at the bottom of this page.



## About Shannon Edwards

Shannon Edwards was a creative gifted spirit, a talented artist and writer, beloved daughter, sister and friend, and, above all, a fun-loving, regular kid. She was born on April 5, 1990, and lived in North Ridgeville most of her life. Her parents met while working at NASA Glenn Research Center, and it was at NASA where Shannon attended daycare and kindergarten.

Shannon was born with a rare neuromuscular disorder called Nemaline Rod Myopathy which prevented her muscles from developing the strength most people have normally. She could not run or jump and had great difficulty with many everyday activities such as climbing stairs. Shannon, however, did not want others to know of her physical challenges and, due to her spunky personality and attitude, most people did not realize she had any problems.

From age 3, Shannon was enrolled in the North Ridgeville Special Education program to help her transition to a school environment. She then attended Wilcox Elementary School in North Ridgeville. Shannon's parents were concerned whether her classmates would accept her, but they soon found that Shannon's amazing magnetism made her instantly popular. One of her teachers recalled how students walking through the classroom would go out of their way to walk by Shannon's desk.

Despite her physical challenges, Shannon studied tap, jazz, and ballet for 5 years and participated in dance recitals.

Shannon was creative and imaginative, and she was constantly drawing and coloring. Shannon developed her own signature dog cartoon and had recently started teaching her friends how to draw it. She planned to be an artist and to raise Beagles when she grew up.

Shannon's proudest moment came as a fourth grader when her book *Millennium Wars* was chosen Book of the Year for the North Ridgeville City Schools Young Author's Program.

Three weeks before her 11th birthday, Shannon suddenly and unexpectedly died of pneumonia. She often suffered from pneumonia during the winter but would blossom again with the warmth of the Spring. This time, it was not meant to be.

## Shannon's Legacy



Shannon's biggest wish was to be a "regular" kid, and thanks to her teachers, friends, family and community, she was able to be just that. Shannon's short life was not an easy one, but it was full of discovery, accomplishment, fun, adventure, and lots of love. She faced her physical and health challenges with grace and dignity and was loved by everyone who knew her.

After Shannon's death, her classmates and teacher at Wilcox Elementary celebrated her 11th birthday and invited Shannon's parents to attend. They sang "Happy Birthday" to her, and in order to send their good wishes to Shannon, they released balloons in her favorite colors of yellow and green into the bright blue sky. As they rose heavenward, the balloons appropriately formed the shape of a heart.

# Grant Criteria for the *Shannon Edwards Memorial Fund*

The Shannon Edwards Memorial Fund was established in the memory of Shannon Edwards, a NRCS student at Wilcox Elementary School until her death at age 10. The goal of the fund is to promote enrichment in the areas in which Shannon expressed interest or from which she benefited while a NRCS. Student.Grants will be considered for projects and activities (could include field trips) that support educational enrichment in the following topics:

- History, with special emphasis on Ohio history
- Activities for the physically challenged students
- Writing projects (Shannon won Best Book of the Year for the North Ridgeville Young Authors program)
- Reading (Shannon was fond of Mysteries and Haunted Stories)
- Outdoor Education (Shannon enjoyed nature and was especially interested in the Rainforest)
- Business related topics (Shannon enjoyed entrepreneurial activities)
- Integrated Arts

Donations may be made to the Shannon Edwards Memorial Fund through:

[The Community Foundation of Lorain County](#)

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Please make checks payable to "Shannon Edwards Fund - North Ridgeville".

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