



For Immediate Release

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ALEX RUDD awarded Laura Smither Scholarship for 2017

The Laura Recovery Center proudly announces that Friendswood High School graduate **Alexander Rudd** is the 20th recipient of the Laura Smither Scholarship. This annual \$3,000 merit based scholarship honors the memory of *Laura Kate Smither*, who was abducted and murdered in Friendswood, April 3, 1997 and the committee is overjoyed to give the scholarship to Alex Rudd this year.

Alex was born in Indiana with British heritage. He traveled with his family and lived in Singapore for 6 years before moving to Friendswood. In 7th Grade he wrote and composed a song to raise money for lymphoma charities in the UK to help a friend of his, Nils, who was battling the disease. The song is entitled "Turning Grey Skies to Blue for Nils" which you can see on YouTube. In addition, Alex has explored sacred choral music with the St. Paul's Choral Scholars, was passionate about playing soccer, and is an enthusiastic student. In his Freshman Year at Friendswood High School he found his passion - musical theater. This year he gave an outstanding performance as the Lead Actor in FHS's production of "Les Miserables", starring as Jean Valjean. This Summer, Alex is performing the Male Lead in the TUTS production of "Once On This Island" at Miller Outdoor Theater, June 7 – 10.

Having experienced and overcome personal challenges, this remarkable young man is sensitive to others with a fear of participation. This has become one of his strengths. Alex's kindness and compassion for others will lead him from strength to strength in the years ahead. We need more kindness in our world, and Alex will exemplify this.

Alex has been accepted at several prestigious Universities but has chosen to accept his place at the Musical Theater Conservatory at Webster University in St. Louis, MO. He is excited to follow his dreams, pursuing a career that fits his strengths of being creative, imaginative and passionate. We are excited to see where his passion leads him.

Laura's parents, Bob and Gay Smither, are so proud of all past scholarship recipients and the many accomplishments they have made in their lives, and are thrilled to add Alex to the scholars. The Scholarship Committee has no doubt that Alex will represent the scholarship and the memory of Laura beyond all expectations. The Laura Recovery Center and the Laura Smither Scholarship Committee wish Alex every success during his college years and beyond!

Former Recipients of the Laura Smither Scholarship are:

1998 Kathryn Klima (Duke University, NC)
1999 Laura Byrne (Wheaton College, IL)
2000 Jared Bourgeois (Brigham Young University, UT)

2001 Tiffany Eppelheimer (Georgetown University, DC)
2002 Rachel Kyle (Rice University, TX)
2003 Olivia Bartlett (Rice University, TX)
2004 Michael Giordano (University of Houston, TX)
2005 Jennifer Robicheaux (Trinity University, TX)
2006 Trudy Taylor (Pepperdine University, CA)
2007 Veronica Arnold (Texas A&M University, TX)
2008 Erin Ellis (University of Notre Dame)
2009 Lena Silva (Rice University, TX)
2010 Elizabeth Conger (North Western University, IL)
2011 Cody Westphal (Texas Christian University, TX)
2012 Ellen Zhou (Princeton University, NJ)
2013 Ryan Bynum (Auburn University, AL)
2014 Caroline Landon (University of Pennsylvania, PA)
2015 Molly Chen (Duke University, NC)
2016 Benjamin Strobe (University of Texas, TX)

Thank you.

"Remember Laura"