



# Sharon High School

181 Pond Street Sharon, MA 02067  
Office: (781) 784-1554 Fax: (781) 784-1550

[www.sharon.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.sharon.k12.ma.us/shs)

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Jose Libano, Principal  
Elizabeth Gavin, Assistant Principal  
Jennifer Graveline, Special Education Administrator

Robert Pomer, Dean of Academic Affairs  
Nicholas Schlierf, Athletic Director

## Counselor recommendation for Lucy Beth Fraser

**Date of birth: 05/01/2001**

Last spring I was asked if I had a student who “exhibits courage to do extraordinary things under challenging circumstances while achieving academic excellence” as the Sam Berns Courage Award nominations were being solicited. In a second, I knew exactly the student to nominate; Lucy Beth Fraser is currently a senior at Sharon High School and is in excellent academic standing and is also a very involved and committed community member. I have worked with Lucy Beth since her freshman year and have known Lucy Beth’s family since 2013 when her older sister entered Sharon High School. At that time, I became aware of Lucy Beth’s health condition, medical needs and physical challenges. Juvenile arthritis (and subsequent related medical and health needs) have impacted Lucy Beth’s day to day routines, but certainly have not impacted her ability to lead a vibrant and adventurous life. As a school community, we have worked with Lucy Beth to help her within the school building and have been thoroughly impressed by her ability to manage very challenging conditions to maximize her learning experiences. It was no surprise when the Assistant District Attorney who works with the Berns family to review the nominations, contacted me to announce that Lucy Beth is the 2018 recipient of this prestigious award (which will be presented in November at conference at Gillette Stadium).

Lucy Beth is incredibly focused on her future planning. She looks to integrate her interest in engineering and technology with services and supports for individuals with specific physical needs and challenges. In developing the most meaningful and focused academic schedule, Lucy Beth always reaches for the stars. Since the start of high school, Lucy Beth tends to want to do more. She has a period of Academic Lab to allow for some physical rest and to organize and manage her responsibilities. As a result, there was no room in her schedule to begin study of a foreign language. Lucy Beth petitioned the school administration to be allowed to enroll in a Virtual High School course (Latin 1 and then Latin II in grade 10), an option only permitted for juniors and seniors. At the end of her sophomore year and year two of Latin, Lucy Beth had exhausted the options through VHS and sought an alternative online option to continue with Latin III (VLACS as noted on her transcript). Ambitious and driven, Lucy Beth successfully managed the load. There have been a few disappointments for Lucy Beth most notably in her math sequence. While she has successfully earned the recommendation to move to Intro to Calculus this year (after a very successful year in Precalculus), she had moved from the accelerated pace math courses in her sophomore year due to some extended medical leave. The change of level made sense and she has achieved extremely well. While the course is titled Intro to Calculus, the concepts are all essential elements of a standard Calculus course. She has embraced opportunities and maximized experiences in all courses across the curriculum, which has been inspiring to observe.

As a typical college searching student in high school, she is actively visiting college campuses to find just the right fit – academically and socially – but for Lucy Beth the right fit also comes with a host of other variables. What is the access to medical doctors and supports if needs arise? How easily can she access her current team of healthcare providers? How will navigating the campus in a wheelchair be in the winter? How will the campus community work to accommodate the needs of a student with physical challenges and a service dog? That being said, each campus visit has included a conversation with engineering professors to determine how best to integrate her vision and career goals. Attending each campus visit with her wheelchair, even if she is not currently experiencing a flare and needing it, and with Barrett (of course), at times has proven challenging to coordinate, but she is committed to getting the fit right– finding the best new home for she and Barrett will be essential to her college career. It is this

### Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Sharon High School strives to be a respectful, caring, dynamic, and inspirational learning community.  
We offer our students the academic, civic, and social tools to be informed, thoughtful, and effective contributors to a globally connected world.

**Perseverance ~ Responsibility ~ Integrity ~ Dedication ~ Excellence**

*Sharon Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of age color disability gender identity homelessness national origin race religion sex or sexual orientation*

type of critical planning and thinking that Lucy Beth needs to do every single day. If she is using her chair, how much additional time will she need to navigate between classes? How will she coordinate her 35-minute Eagle Block period to provide Barrett with his necessary break, access the nurse for daily jaw therapy and meet with the teacher to confirm a book tutorial appointment or ask a question? She does it – many of us simply cannot comprehend the kind of coordination and energy it takes Lucy Beth to make her daily routines look seamless to her peers and teachers.

At the beginning of her junior year, Lucy Beth asked if I would write in support of her application for a service dog from the NEADS Service Dog Training Program. Here are a few of the sentiments I shared in support of her application.

*“With the limited knowledge that I have about the NEADS program, I anticipate that Lucy Beth could benefit in a number of ways related to her physical restrictions. Whether providing assistance with doors and other physical obstacles or retrieving items that are out of reach, or cueing and assisting with other tasks, I believe she could benefit from the service and would gain a higher level of independence.*

*Lucy Beth is a mature and serious-minded young woman. She is focused and determined on her goals yet also demonstrates flexibility and resilience if circumstances are beyond her control. In speaking with both the school nurse and her teachers, the common sentiments relate to her kind and sweet nature and temperament and her determination to maintain independence through some of the most challenging circumstances. She maintains a full academic course load including an online Latin class. Taking the class online allows for a period in the school day for her to tend to any medical or academic needs without impacting instructional time.*

*Lucy Beth’s personal motivation, personality, character and integrity are simply impeccable. She balances significant academic demands with her outside interests in both dance and theater. She has been involved in multiple shows, choreography with junior drama productions and outside dance instruction. Most inspiring is her work with advocacy groups to promote awareness for people with physical challenges. She has shared her own struggles and stories in a myriad of venues. Increasing awareness related to juvenile arthritis is her personal mission. She has traveled with her family to attend summits and advocacy group seminars despite the challenges that she faces when she travels. Mobility and dexterity in both gross and fine motor activities can be a significant challenge. Lucy Beth’s excitement about the kind of independence and freedom that a NEADS partner will provide is contagious. When asked to put together this reference, I was honored, flattered and thrilled to share my thoughts. Lucy Beth is an inspiration to me and to all of us in our school community. “*

Since completing her NEADS application, Lucy Beth has been partnered with Barrett, an English Lab who provides her with support and assistance. The match process can be very long and Lucy Beth was hoping for a match that allowed for training before she heads off for college in 2019. By some wonderful stroke of fate, Barrett and Lucy were deemed a match this past January (just as she was recovering from another major surgery and way ahead of any anticipated timeframe). She was informed of the intensive training process requiring a residential stay at the NEADS training facility. In February, Lucy Beth returned to school with Barrett and has been instrumental in informing our school community (her peers, teachers, school personnel) about the role of service dogs in society (and more importantly and relevantly, at Sharon High School).

As a member of our school community, Lucy Beth rocks! Here are a few observations from teachers. (When I asked for feedback, it just kept coming, so there is quite a bit to share!)

As a student in American Studies (a combined English and US History course) students are asked to really elevate their game. They are challenged by integrating concepts from both disciplines and work with other classmates to challenge ideas and to dig deep into primary sources linking to literary themes. Lucy Beth’s two teachers, Jill Stevens and David Heller, share:

*“She embraces the spirit of the class always looking to make insightful comments and big picture connections. Most importantly she demonstrates incredible resilience and determination. In December the class was working through group research and projects in preparation for a major mid-year project. Despite our offer of accommodations on the length and depth of the assignment due to her surgery, she undertook the full challenge and performed exceptionally.”*

In her Engineering and Design class, Lucy Beth was incredibly responsible and dedicated to both the tasks at hand as well as the team-oriented nature of the class. Her teacher, Andrew Tessier noted:

“In both Physics in freshman year, and in the Engineering Design class last year, there were times that Lucy Beth was struggling with fatigue and pain but would work through to keep connected with her group and maintain the progress of the project.”

The school nurse works with Lucy Beth every day. She comes to the nurse’s office daily to complete jaw physical therapy, and any other needs that she may have. Debbie Feldman shares,

“Lucy Beth is sweet, open to suggestions and incredibly responsive and flexible. When flares impact her mobility and when she managing high levels of pain (which is often), she never complains and is almost stoic. When she is wheelchair dependent, it is clear that Lucy Beth hates losing her independence but realizes what she needs in order to keep on here path to achieve. Currently that involves an adult moving her wheelchair around the building and assisting her with moving in and out of her chair as needed. Her perseverance is absolutely remarkable.” (Since acquiring an electric wheelchair, Lucy Beth has gained more control and independence – something she clearly was striving for!)

English and Drama teacher and advisor to the Drama and Theater Programs, Sandra Dennis shares,

“I think the most amazing thing about Lucy Beth is that no matter how she feels she participates 100%. During musical rehearsals, she works as hard as everyone else and I am amazed that she has the stamina to continue. She doesn't let her ailments stop her. She was on the sailing team at the start of her freshman year but made a decision not to continue. At that time, her mother asked if she could join the cast of *Hairspray* and I was - yes!! She came in late in September, learned all the dances, was positive and upbeat and had a great time!! Lucy Beth is a cool kid!”

Yes, Lucy Beth is a dancer. In both *Hairspray* as a sophomore and *The Whiz* this past year, I was amazed and impressed by her skill, stamina and grace! And most recently, I watched a rehearsal for this fall’s performance of *Beauty and The Beast* and she was right up leading a group of dancers through a number. Clearly there are times that she cannot engage in her full dance team competition or training, but she always attends and supports even when she cannot be on the dance floor.

And, Lucy Beth has a strong bond with her friends. Just to share one example, I have the pleasure of serving as an assistant for Barrett if he needs a break and Lucy Beth is unable to take him outside. (This is a rare occurrence but I cherish the role.) One day while serving as Barrett’s companion for a break, one of her friends saw me in the hallway with Barrett and immediately asked if Lucy Beth was OK. Seeing me with Barrett was certainly the trigger for the question, but the essence of the question was genuine care and concern for Lucy Beth.

Life will never be easy for Lucy Beth, but that does not mean that life is not good for her. Life is good for her – she is blessed and thankful for the support of her family for committing to making life as fulfilling and adventurous as possible. While at times Lucy Beth may physically appear unlike her peers and have very different needs, there are times that she looks like any other teenager. Some people may not understand the true impact and chronicity of her disease, which is her motivation for advocacy and awareness. Despite these challenges, she maximizes her experiences and approaches life with a positive attitude and a friendly greeting for all. Lucy Beth will prove to be a valued contributor to your campus community and will also inspire those around her to maximize the opportunities and adventures.

Sincerely,  
Andrea J. d'Entremont