



RISING STAR AWARD

PRESENTED TO:

BRYCE TAFT

The Rising Star Award celebrates young individuals who make a significant impact in their schools and neighborhoods, inspiring others through their actions and promoting kindness and service.

Nominated by: Joseph Davidson, Jenna Taft, and Catherine Lio

Summary of Nomination:

On February 27, 2023, Bryce Taft experienced unimaginable loss with the sudden passing of his 13-year-old brother, Bennet. At an age when most are still discovering who they are, Bryce faced profound grief. Rather than letting it define him, he chose to honor Bennet's memory by lifting others.

In the wake of tragedy, Bryce co-founded The BT8 Foundation, named for Bennet, with a mission to transform loss into love through community service and charitable events. In just two years, he has led initiatives including an annual wiffle ball tournament fundraiser, a food drive on what would have been Bennet's 14th birthday for the Itasca Food Pantry, a winter coat drive for senior citizens at Forest View Rehabilitation and Nursing Center—where he purchased 10 coats with his own earnings—and participation in Holy Ghost Parish's Giving Tree, donating gifts on behalf of himself and his brother to families in need. Through the BT8 Foundation, Bryce has also supported scholarships, adopt-a-senior efforts, and other fundraising opportunities.

Bryce's resilience, leadership, and generosity have not only honored his brother's life but have created lasting impacts within the community. He is a role model to his peers and an inspiration to adults alike, truly representing the spirit of Itasca.

On behalf of the Village, we honor Bryce Taft with the Rising Star Award. Through his strength and generosity, he has turned grief into action and created a lasting impact that touches families across the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Pruy", written over a white background.

Mayor Jeff Pruy

September 7, 2025