Pick a subject, and Adam Clack excelled.

Science and math? There’s a long list there. Between plans to be a NASA propulsion engineer, memorizing more digits in Pi than most anyone, and plastering the periodic table across his phone, Adam knew his science and math backward and forward.

Music? He picked out one of the more unique instruments in band – the French horn – to go along with his musical talents on display in the junior high show choir, the Boppin’ BeeBees.

And outgoing personality? Adam always loved to share his faith, loved to tell jokes, and wouldn’t shy away from discussing political views with his vast network of friends.
Honoring Adam’s memory and ideals

“So many knew him because he would go up to anybody and just talk to them,” his mother, Terry, said.

Tragically, in May of 2018, Adam passed away unexpectedly in his sleep, days short of graduating eighth grade at Williamsville Junior High School.

The impact Adam made in his time on Earth was immediately felt. In the following weeks, an outpouring of support came to the Clack family from the Sherman-Williamsville community and beyond. The community rallied to support the music programs at Williamsville schools through generous memorial contributions. Additionally, Adam’s neighbors and other friends pooled their resources to purchase a double French horn, engraved to honor Adam, that was presented to the WHS band. One of Adam’s close friends plays the instrument now, and future students will play it for years to come. At the park in Sherman, there’s a bench and tree dedicated in Adam’s honor.

Then Adam’s parents, Gary and Terry, received a call about another generous act. Someone was interested in setting up a fund in Adam’s honor. Gary asked some respected coworkers how to go about getting that done, and both pointed to the Community Foundation.

“The more we learned about the Community Foundation, what it’s about and who is already involved with it, we became more and more comfortable that this is where we want to go with this opportunity that we were blessed with,” Gary said.

A number of other community members who knew and loved Adam contributed as well. So the Clacks established the Adam Mitchell Clack Memorial Fund, a donor-advised fund to help honor Adam.

This spring, the Clacks made their first grant to Williamsville High School to offer a scholarship to a graduating senior. Amy Saladino, who is pursuing a degree in secondary math education at Illinois State, was the recipient.

But much like Adam, who was involved in so many aspects of the community, the Clacks are open to seeing the fund make an impact in different ways.

“I think about other things that are good causes that the fund could support. Perhaps there’s more than one annual award recipient down the road,” Gary said. “And if an opportunity comes along where there’s a charitable group whose needs are consistent with Adam’s mindset, we would potentially be interested in directing funds to go to those kinds of initiatives.”

Right now, the memorials in the Sherman-Williamsville community and the scholarship award hold deep meaning. The Clacks are surrounded by friends who knew Adam’s energy, his tenacity, his spirit.

But the Clacks know with each graduating lass, that direct connection to knowing who Adam is won’t be there. The hope is through establishing the fund, his ideals and principles will very much be present for decades to come.

“The boy who is playing the French horn right now is a very good friend of Adam. The young lady who received the first scholarship this year knew him, and she felt very honored to be selected as the first recipient,” Gary said, “but years from now, students will probably wonder ‘Who is Adam Clack?’”

“It’s great to be able to honor people in perpetuity this way, people who stood for something very positive. This is something we want to be around for years to honor those ideals. I think that’s what Adam’s memory will become, those ideals, and what we should be striving for.”

For more information on starting a donor-advised fund or to contribute to the Adam Mitchell Clack Memorial Fund, please contact the Community Foundation at 217.789.4431 or visit CFLL.org.