The Niswonger Foundation was established in 2001 to make a positive and sustainable difference in education in Northeast Tennessee. This dream was envisioned by Scott M. Niswonger, Chairman Emeritus of Landair Transport, Incorporated and Forward Air Corporation. These companies, founded by Mr. Niswonger, were the first two Greeneville-based companies to be taken public in the history of Greene County, Tennessee. Jointly, the companies have combined annual revenue of over $700 million dollars and employ over 4000 people.

With the success of his two companies, the philosophy of “Learn, Earn, Return” was created. Using the innovative model of now having a private, for-profit logistics company, Landair Transport, support a not-for-profit educational foundation, the goal of bringing rigorous, relevant, and cost effective programs to public education became a mission. Fundamental to the success of the Niswonger Foundation has been a clear focus on removing constraints to educational innovation and problem solving, thus allowing local school systems to better provide for student needs. By building school programs that are research based and sustainable, the Niswonger Foundation has become a recognized voice for educational reform in the State of Tennessee, while nurturing the next generation of leaders.

The bases for the Foundation’s work are the School Partnership program and the Scholarship and Leadership program. The Niswonger Foundation expands its philosophy of “Learn, Earn, Return” beyond Northeast Tennessee through involvement in numerous statewide educational initiatives. In addition, the Foundation shares a percentage of our operating funds for grants to other not-for-profit agencies for programs that support our mission “To create opportunities for individual and community growth through education and other sustainable projects.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2019

Courtney Johnson – Maryville College • Morgan Thomas – Clemson University • Matthew Widener – East Tennessee State University
Zachary Ward – University of Tennessee-Knoxville • Trenton Yount – University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Niswonger Scholars welcome the new class of 2023.
Christian, son of Rita Dalton, is a graduate of Hancock County High School with a 4.0 GPA. He served as president of HCHS Student Council, vice president of the Sneedville chapter of FFA, Senior Representative on the Tennessee 4-H State Council and as an Upper 8 Scout for the Tennessee 4-H Eastern Region All Star Council. He is a member of the 4-H Honor Club, 4-H All-Stars and 4-H Livestock, Land & Soil and Wildlife Judging Teams. He was nominated for and received “Vol State” at the 2015 4-H Roundup. He has completed community service hours through 4-H and FFA.

Christian is attending University of Tennessee-Knoxville and majoring in Agriculture Extension Education. He completed a summer internship at the Hawkins County Extension Office. He is working as an intern for Tennessee Farmer’s Cooperative. Christian was selected to serve as Ambassador for the Herbert College of Agriculture.

Kori Lynn Smith
University of Tennessee, Senior

Kori graduated from Chuckey-Doak High School with honors and is the daughter of Gena Shipley. She served as president of her senior class, vice president of the Chuckey-Doak FFA, Co-Captain of the Greene County and City Schools’ Destination Imagination Team, Co-Captain of the Lady Knight’s Soccer Team and Co-Captain of the Lady Knight’s Tennis Team. She held membership with the Black Knight’s Nation, the Chuckey-Doak Marching Band, Spanish Club, Tusculum College’s Upward Bound Program and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She is a graduate of the Greene County Youth Leadership program. Her awards include Doer of the Word, Most Likely to Succeed, Best of the Preps Girls Tennis award, Best of the Preps Community Excellence award, State TopSeller in Agriculture Sales, Secretary of the State FFA.
Kori is attending University of Tennessee-Knoxville and majoring in Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology and minor in International Agriculture and Resources. She has earned the Dean’s List at UTK each semester. She enjoys volunteering at The Muse Knoxville. Kori is attending University of Tennessee-Knoxville and majoring in Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology and minor in International Agriculture and Resources. She has earned the Dean’s List at UTK each semester. She enjoys volunteering at The Muse Knoxville.

Brittany Renee Church
National Honor Society

Brittany is a graduate of Johnston County High School. She is the daughter of Billy Church and Tammy Branch. She is attending Austin Peay State University with a biology major and a minor in Professional Education. She is a recipient of the Dean’s Scholarship.

Emily Laurel Ellison
Clemson University/Junior

Emily, daughter of Eric and Patricia Ellison, graduated as valedictorian of Cocke County High School. She was a member of the Cocke County FFA livestock judging, dairy judging, envirothon, parliamentary procedure, and veterinary science teams. She was selected as the Tennessee FFA Eastern Region Star Farmer, and won the Tennessee State FFA Sheep Production Proficiency. Emily served as president of both the Cocke County FFA and the Tennessee FFA Sheep Producers Association. She was active as the member of the Cocke County 4-H, Cocke County High School Student Council, National FFA Organization, Mes Alpha Theta Math Club and Beta Club.

Brittany Renee Church
National Honor Society

Brittany is a graduate of Johnston County High School. She is the daughter of Billy Church and Tammy Branch. She served as the vice president and 4th place of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Sargent in Arms of the National Technical Homes Society, secretary of the National Latin Honors Society, and as a member of the Latin Club, National Honors Society, Motorsports Club, Future Farmers of America, Chess Club, Media Club and ETUS Upward Bound. She served her community by volunteering at Johnson City Medical Center, Niswonger Children’s Hospital, and Calvary Baptist Church. Brittany plans to pursue a career in education.

Emily Laurel Ellison
Clemson University/Junior

Emily, daughter of Eric and Patricia Ellison, graduated as valedictorian of Cocke County High School. She was a member of the Cocke County FFA livestock judging, dairy judging, envirothon, parliamentary procedure, and veterinary science teams. She was selected as the Tennessee FFA Eastern Region Star Farmer, and won the Tennessee State FFA Sheep Production Proficiency. Emily served as president of both the Cocke County FFA and the Tennessee FFA Sheep Producers Association. She was active as the member of the Cocke County 4-H, Cocke County High School Student Council, National FFA Organization, Mes Alpha Theta Math Club and Beta Club.

Emily is attending Clemson University where she is majoring in Animal and Veterinary Science with a minor in Biological Sciences. She is a member of Sigma Alpha and serves on the disciplinary committee. She is a member of the Clemson University Professional Greek Council and the Tigers for Tigers conservation group. Emily plans a career in veterinary medicine, serving both large and small animals.

Lorraine Faith Hayes
Wake Forest University, Junior

Lorraine, daughter of Denise and Keith Hayes, graduated from Cloudland High School with honors and distinction. She served as Youth Leadership Delegate, Varsity Cheerleading Captain, Senior Class President, Bible History Club President, and Relay for Life Club President. Her awards include, Highest ACT Score Award, Principal’s Pride Award and UCA All-American Cheerleader. She has completed volunteer hours through Salvation Army, MARSH Blood drives, Johnson City Medical Center, Operation Christmas Child Processing Center and multiple mission trips with her church.

Lorraine is attending Wake Forest University on a pre-law track. She is a peer leader within the WFC Conduct System, and in Students to Students, a campus ministry. She is a member of Alpha Delta Pi sorority and a varsity cheerleader.

Tyler James Myers
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, Junior

Ty, son of Corey and Denise Myers, graduated first in his class with a 4.0 GPA from Tennessee High School. He served as a member of National Honor Society, Beta Club and Student Council. He was selected for Student Congress on Policies in Education in 2015. He was selected as Senior Class High Court King. He is the Founder, President and CEO of Poor Boy Gadgets. He serves his community with the Chamber of Commerce, Love-N-People, Adaptive Aquatics and Highlands Fellowship Church.

Ty is attending University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and majoring in Biology. He serves as a leader in the YoungLife program near his campus.
Sarah, daughter of Beth and the late Mark Douthat, graduated with honors from West Greene High School. She served as senior class vice president, was junior class president, and was the student representative for the Greene County School Board. She served as vice president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and First Priority, and chairman of the Parliamentary Procedure team. She has served as secretary, vice president and president of the Future Farmers of America. She was voted “Best All Round” by her senior class. She served as a member of National Honor Society, National English Honor Society and National Society for High School Seniors. In service to her community, she has volunteered with Special Olympics, Samaritan’s Purse-Operation Christmas Child Processing Plant, School Clean up Days, and the McDonald Outreach Center.

Sarah is attending Tennessee Technological University and majoring in Engineering. She was elected as a Senator for the College of Engineering. She was elected as fundraising chair for the Society for Women Engineers. She serves as a tutor for the engineering department at Tennessee Technological University.

Alexis is a graduate of Unicoi County High School and the daughter of Crystal Winston. During her time at UCHS she served as president and section leader of the marching band, senior class secretary and homecoming representative for Student Council. She served as a member of National Honor Society, Beta Club, Book Club, Spanish Club, Student’s Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), secretary for the Christian Student Union and as the Chick-Fil-A Leader Academy secretary. She is a Track and Field athlete. Her awards include, Chemistry II Award and the Marching Band’s Most Excellent Junior Award.

Alexis is attending Tennessee Technological University and majoring in Engineering. She was elected as a Senator for the College of Engineering. She was elected as fundraising chair for the Society for Women Engineers. She serves as a tutor for the engineering department at Tennessee Technological University.

Rithvik is the son of Suresh Vutukuri and Sunitha Gunda and he graduated from Dobyns-Bennett High School with distinction. He is a National Merit Semifinalist. Rithvik received the AP Psychology Award, is a National AP Scholar, and an AP Scholar with Distinction. He served as president of the Student Council, President of both Mu Alpha Theta and the Beta Club. He was a builder, designer and programmer in Robotics and participated in the Science Olympiad and the National Science Bowl. He has volunteered with Holston Valley Medical Center, H.O.T.S. (Higher Order Thinking Skills), Operation Gratitude, Middle School Math Day and Rubiks Cube Lessons.

Rithvik is attending Tulane University and majoring in Neuroscience. He was elected to the Undergraduate Student Government as a Senator for the School of Sciences and Engineering; as Internal Vice President of the Science and Engineering Honor Society; to serve as undergraduate representative for the Pre-Medical Society; and as medical school liaison for the Minority Association of Pre-Med Students.

Rithvik received a grant from the Center of Engaged Learning and Teaching and a second grant from Newcomb-Tulane College to fund an independent research project.

Alexis is attending University of Tennessee at Martin. Her major is Health and Human Performance. Public Health.

Jasmine graduated from Morristown-Hamblen High School East. She is the daughter of Jennifer and Casey Cook. While at Morristown East, she served as a member of Student Council, Spanish Club and Science Club. She participated in Scholars Bowl. She achieved the honor roll every academic year 1st through 12th grade. Her other awards include, AP English Award and AP Scholar Award. She enjoys volunteering as a mentor at Meadowview Middle School.

Jasmine is attending University of Tennessee-Knoxville and is majoring in Communications and Business.

Aubrie is the daughter of John and Kim Strange and a graduate of Cocke County High School. She is an AP Scholar with Honors, and a Furman Scholar. She served as Student Body President, Key Club leader, Cocke County FFA chapter vice president, Spanish Club treasurer, Beta Club secretary, National Honor Society historian, Yearbook editor and Debate Club assistant coach. She was a National Qualifier in the Future Business Leaders of America AgBusiness Competition. She enjoyed volunteering with Tennessee’s Babies with Special Needs, the Key Club, Volunteer Riders of Knoxville, and CCHS Red Regiment.

Aubrie is attending Samford University and majoring in Public Relations.

Aubrie is the daughter of John and Kim Strange and a graduate of Cocke County High School. She is an AP Scholar with Honors, and a Furman Scholar. She served as Student Body President, Key Club leader, Cocke County FFA chapter vice president, Spanish Club treasurer, Beta Club secretary, National Honor Society historian, Yearbook editor and Debate Club assistant coach. She was a National Qualifier in the Future Business Leaders of America AgBusiness Competition. She enjoyed volunteering with Tennessee’s Babies with Special Needs, the Key Club, Volunteer Riders of Knoxville, and CCHS Red Regiment.

Aubrie is attending Samford University and majoring in Public Relations.

Rithvik Vutukuri
Tulane University, Sophomore

Rithvik is attending Tulane University and majoring in Neuroscience. He was elected to the Undergraduate Student Government as a Senator for The School of Sciences and Engineering; as Internal Vice President of the Science and Engineering Honor Society; to serve as undergraduate representative for the Pre-Medical Society; and as medical school liaison for the Minority Association of Pre-Med Students.

Rithvik received a grant from the Center of Engaged Learning and Teaching and a second grant from Newcomb-Tulane College to fund an independent research project.

Aubrie is attending University of Tennessee at Martin. Her major is Health and Human Performance. Public Health.

Jasmine Nicole Martin
University of Tennessee, Sophomore

Aubrie Claire Strange
Tennessee Technological University, Sophomore

Alexis Renee Harvey
Tennessee Technological University, Sophomore

Jasmine Nicole Martin
University of Tennessee, Sophomore

Alexis is a graduate of Unicoi County High School and the daughter of Crystal Winston. During her time at UCHS she served as president and section leader of the marching band, senior class secretary and homecoming representative for Student Council. She served as a member of National Honor Society, Beta Club, Book Club, Spanish Club, Student’s Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), secretary for the Christian Student Union and as the Chick-Fil-A Leader Academy secretary. She is a Track and Field athlete. Her awards include, Chemistry II Award and the Marching Band’s Most Excellent Junior Award.

Alexis is attending Tennessee Technological University and majoring in Engineering. She was elected as a Senator for the College of Engineering. She was elected as fundraising chair for the Society for Women Engineers. She serves as a tutor for the engineering department at Tennessee Technological University.

Aubrie is attending University of Tennessee at Martin. Her major is Health and Human Performance. Public Health.
Trenton Chase Dickerson  
University of Tennessee, Freshman

Trent is a graduate of Morristown-Hamblen High School East and is the son of Phillip and Tina Dickerson. He graduated with honors and distinction and with a 4.0 GPA. He was a member of the 31 + ACT club, a National Merit Commended Student, and an ambassador for the Student Congress on Policies and Education. He served as President of the Advanced Choir at Morristown East and was selected to perform with the All-State Honors Choir in Nashville his junior and senior year. As a member of the school’s DECA club, Trent achieved 3rd place in the Sports and Entertainment Marketing category of the state-wide competition his sophomore year. He worked for two and a half years at Hobby Lobby, and during the summer after his junior year, earned an internship with Morristown Utilities Systems. He enjoys serving his community through Student Council, Change One Person Everyday (C.O.P.E.), and with his church, leading worship and helping during bible school.

Trent is attending the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and majoring in computer science.

Erica Brooke Seal  
East Tennessee State University, Freshman

Erica Seal is the daughter of Jennifer Greene and Carl Seal. She graduated Hancock County High School with honors and Distinction. Throughout her high school career, she received various awards for academic distinction. She served as 4-H President, FFA Vice President, and as a member of various clubs such as FBLA, Spanish Club, and Fine Arts Club. Erica has volunteered in the 4-H Club, helped organize the local demonstration room for the Hancock County Fall Festival, and served as an AmeriCorps member. She has also completed volunteer hours through Operation Christmas Child and Make a Difference Blood Drive.

Erica is attending East Tennessee State University on a Pre-Med track.

John Henry Turner  
University of Tennessee, Freshman

John is the son of John and Crystal Turner of New Market. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Jefferson County High School. He captained the JCHS Scholar’s Bowl team for two years. He also served as President of Jefferson County High School’s Leo Club. He worked for The Standard Banner covering a variety of sports across the county. He was a graduate of the Jefferson County Youth Leadership Program. He has volunteered through the Chamber of Commerce, The Jefferson County Clerk’s office, Habitat for Humanity, Appalachian Electric Cooperative, and the Dandridge Lion’s Club.

John is attending the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, with a major in Public Administration.

Aisling Grace Hagan  
University of Tennessee, Freshman

Aisling is the daughter of Jim and Kate Hagan. She is a graduate of Honors and distinction from David Crockett High School, where she served as Student Body President, FFA President, and as an active member of the BETA club. She also served as Student Representative on the Washington County Board of Education and attended the Tennessee Governor’s School for Agricultural Sciences. She is a three time state FFA champion and twice National runner-up in Floriculture, Nursery/Landscaping, and Forestry.

She served her community by volunteering with multiple organizations in the town of Jonesborough as well as Mountain States Health Alliance, and the Washington County Public Library.

Aisling is attending the University of Tennessee-Knoxville as an Agricultural Education major.
Samuel "Sam" Lucas Brashears  
Sullivan North High School, Kingsport, Tennessee  
Wake Forest University, English, Chemistry and Biology  
East Tennessee State University, Quillen College of Medicine, pursuing Doctor of Medicine

Matthew Johann Grimm  
David Boone High School, Gray, Tennessee  
University of Tennessee, Nursing  
Tusculum University, Nursing/Family Nurse Practitioner  
Nurse, Kingsport Primary Care, Kingsport, Tennessee

Dustin Cole Flower  
Tennessee High School, Bristol, Tennessee  
Vanderbilt University, Mechanical Engineering  
Mechanical Engineer, Nuclear Fuel Services, Erwin, Tennessee

CLASS OF 2018

Hope Marie Adkins  
Volunteer High School, Church Hill, Tennessee  
Carson-Newman University, Family and Consumer Sciences Education  
Alumni Relations Coordinator, Carson-Newman University, Jefferson City, Tennessee

McKenzie "Kenzie" Breanna Reynolds  
North Greene High School, Greeneville, Tennessee  
University of Tennessee, Accounting/Information Management  
University of Tennessee, Masters in Accountancy  
Accountant, Blackburn, Childers & Steagall, Johnson City, Tennessee

Kristen "Alora" Ricker  
South Greene High School, Greeneville, Tennessee  
Milligan College, Biology/Chemistry  
East Tennessee State University, Quillen College of Medicine, pursuing Doctor of Medicine

Dillan Wayne Shults  
Cody High School, Cody, Wyoming  
Tennessee Technological University, Electrical Engineering  
Electrical Engineer, Jarden Zinc, Greeneville, Tennessee

Madeline Danielle Standbridge  
Sullivan East High School, Kingsport, Tennessee  
University of Tennessee, Biomedical Engineering  
AmeriCorps, Patient Navigator, Pittsburgh Mercy Family Health Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

CLASS OF 2019

Courtney Sherry Johnson  
Gallatin-Peirman High School, Gallatin, Tennessee  
Maryville College, Exercise Science  
South College, pursuing physical therapy

Morgan Alexander Thomas  
Science Hill High School, Johnson City, Tennessee  
Clemson University, Chemistry  
Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy, pursuing Doctor of Pharmacy, Johnson City, Tennessee

Zachary Tyler Ward  
Volunteer High School, Church Hill, Tennessee  
University of Tennessee, Chemistry/VolsTeach  
Three-Year Missionary Tour with Chi Alpha

Matthew Hunter Widener  
David Crockett High School, Joneboro, Tennessee  
East Tennessee State University, English  
English Teacher, David Crockett High School, Joneboro, Tennessee

Trenton Blake Yount  
Hawkes County High School, Snowville, Tennessee  
University of Tennessee, Mechanical Engineering  
Thermal Design Engineer, Raycap/Stealth, Charleston, South Carolina

“The task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there.”  
- John Buchan

“BOARD OFFICERS

SCOTT M. NISWONGER  
Chairman and Founder

NIKKI L. NISWONGER  
Secretary

ALAN LEVINE  
Executive Chairman, President and CEO  
Ballad Health

DAVID GOLDEN  
Former Senior Vice President  
Chief Legal and Sustainability Officer  
Corporate Secretary  
Eastman Chemical

JOHN TWEED  
President and CEO  
Landair Transport

DR. NANCY DISHNER  
President and CEO  
SCHOLARSHIP AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

DR. NANCY DISHNER  
Director

BARBARA RATES  
Assistant Director

KATHY O’DELL  
Office Manager
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