

Although there are over 9 million American parents with disabilities, there are almost no scholarships specifically for the hundreds of thousands of students who have parents with disabilities. These awards not only recognize the diversity and contributions of these families, but their financial need. U.S. families with a disabled parent are twice as likely to be below the poverty level than are families with non-disabled parents. In addition, standard college financial aid applications do not typically weigh the considerable medical or specialized equipment expenses that many parents with disabilities incur. These expenses can substantially reduce the family income by tens of thousands of dollars each year.

Each award is a \$1,000 college scholarship for an outstanding high school senior or college student who has at least one parent with a disability. Selection criteria included academic performance, community service, letters of recommendation and an essay describing the experience of growing up with a parent with a disability. Students applying for these scholarships included those with parents who were quadriplegic, blind, deaf, amputees, as well as parents with spinal cord injury, cancer, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, mental illness, ALS, HIV/AIDS, traumatic brain injury, muscular dystrophy or intellectual disability. As one of several projects of Through the Looking Glass' National Center, these scholarships are primarily funded through the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), U.S. Department of Education.

Scholarships have been awarded to the following students:

Grace Bevelheimer (hometown Camp Hill, Pennsylvania; attending Kutztown University, Kutztown, Pennsylvania); Steven Eacker (Colton, Washington: Arizona State University, Tempe); Sharon Finn (San Antonio, Texas; University of Missouri-Columbia); Trudi Gatteys (St. Louis, Missouri; Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri); Amanda Gemmecke (Robinson, Illinois; Oakland City University, Oakland City, Indiana); Andrea Headley (Pompano Beach, Florida; University of Miami, Coral Gables); Dazlin Royal (Dallas, Texas; University of Texas at Dallas); John Rogers (Riverton, Utah; University of Utah, Salt Lake City); Damaris Sanchez (New York City, NY; New York University - Steinhardt of Education); Sean Thuesen (St. Anthony, Minnesota; University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire); and, Simone Wood (East Point, Georgia; Florida A&M University, Tallahassee).

Scholarship winners include those whose mother or father has a disability as well as those families in which both parents have disabilities. Please click on the student to read all or a portion of each student's essay that was part of their scholarship application.

New scholarships will be offered in 2012 and later years. For more information, please check back on Through the Looking Glass' website after January 1, 2012 (www.lookingglass.org). Our website will also include findings from a national study of over one thousand young adults of parents with disabilities conducted by Through the Looking Glass.

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