

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund! In the following pages, you will find all the information you need to apply for the 2009 O'Neill Tabani Enrichment Fund. This will be the fifth year of the fund, and it has been a big success thus far. To date, twenty-six students have received grants to help cover the costs of pursuing their postsecondary education and enrichment goals!

Each year, the committee looks to improve the fund and reviews suggestions made by applicants. Please note there are a few significant changes in this year's application. The application has been updated and electronic submission of the application is available for the first time. Please pay close attention to the instructions and requirements of the application, as they have changed from what you might remember from years past.

In these tough financial times, every little bit helps when planning to pay for college. NDSS encourages you to apply for the enrichment fund if you are just thinking about applying for a postsecondary program or considering taking courses. Even if you have not yet decided whether you will actual take a course, or if you have not been accepted into the program you want, you can still apply for a scholarship from the O'Neill Tabani Enrichment Fund. We cannot accept applications past the deadline (July 17, 2009), so if you are even just considering college or an enrichment course, please apply. It's always better to be prepared!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at egeller@ndss.org.

Good luck!!!

Best wishes,

Erin Geller
National Down Syndrome Society



The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund

Application Form 2009

APPLICATION DATES AND DEADLINES

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED/E-MAILED BY
July 17, 2009**

APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY AUGUST 21, 2009

History

The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund was established in January 2005 by Zeshan Tabani to honor his friend Joshua O'Neill. Joshua is an inspirational young man who happens to have Down syndrome. Joshua and Zeshan grew up in the same neighborhood in Fort Wayne, IN. Zeshan is close with the O'Neill family, and he and Joshua's younger brother, Noah, are good friends.

Joshua was fortunate to participate in a postsecondary education experience and he benefited greatly from this opportunity. Joshua now lives independently, with supports, in New Haven, CT. He works part-time and leads a productive and happy life. Zeshan was inspired by Joshua's drive to enrich himself with postsecondary education and he wanted to help others who might not have the same opportunity.

As more individuals with Down syndrome are being included K-12 and graduating with their peers, the next step for many young adults with Down syndrome includes pursuing postsecondary education, which may include participation in a postsecondary program or simply taking enrichment courses. Financial aid is rarely available to these individuals, and while many young adults with Down syndrome want to continue to enrich their lives through further education after high school, they frequently do not have the financial means to do so.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund is to offer financial assistance to young adults with Down syndrome who wish to continue to enrich their lives by enrolling in postsecondary programs or taking enrichment classes that will help them to enrich life through employment, independent living skills, life skills or another way.

NDSS Mission and Vision

The mission of NDSS is to be the national advocate for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. The National Down Syndrome Society envisions a world in which all people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, realize their life aspirations, and become valued members of welcoming communities.

NDSS and The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund

NDSS is proud to have been chosen to facilitate and administer this grant that will benefit individuals with Down syndrome to pursue postsecondary education and enrichment classes.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Individuals with Down syndrome who are 18 years of age or older
- Intention to enroll in a class or program that will enrich your life through employment, independent living skills, life skills or another way.

Grants

Five (5) grants will be awarded, each grant not to exceed \$1000. The grant must be used to pay for the tuition for a course or postsecondary program at a local college, educational institution, learning center or employment training program. The majority of the grant must be for tuition, but some funds can be used to help with books, transportation and other related supplies. In order for the funds to be disbursed, proper documentation (e.g. receipts, bills) will need to be submitted.

Application Procedures

You should complete the application as independently as possible. The applications can be typed (preferred) or printed neatly.

Materials to Include in Application Package

1. Application
2. Questions About Me
3. Item that helps us to know you better
4. One page essay
5. Parent/Guardian Information (Must be filled out by parent or guardian)
6. Two (2) Letters of Recommendation (Use enclosed forms). Letters of Recommendation should come from people that are not family members such as teachers, employers, coworkers, etc.
7. ***OPTIONAL* A third letter of recommendation-** One (1) Letter of Recommendation (Use enclosed form) from a relative (parent, sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent, cousin, etc.).
8. High school transcript or equivalent (**Preferred, but optional. Please do not send your IEP**).

Application packages must be complete to be considered.

NDSS strongly prefers that applicants submit applications electronically by emailing the necessary materials to: Erin Geller at egeller@ndss.org .

If electronic submission is not an option for you, please mail complete application packages to:

The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund
C/o Erin Geller
National Down Syndrome Society
666 Broadway, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10012

You will receive an e-mail or letter confirmation that we received your application. **Please do not call about the status of your application, as we will not be able to provide information over the phone.** You will receive an e-mail or letter letting you know if you were awarded the grant. If you have any questions about completing the application, please contact Erin Geller at egeller@ndss.org.

**The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund
Application Form**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Alternate Phone Number _____ (optional)

E-mail address _____

Date of Birth _____
Month Day Year

Social Security Number _____

Are you involved with NDSS Yes No

Are you involved with a NDSS Affiliate Support Group Yes No

If yes, which Affiliate Group _____

Do you prefer to be contacted by email or regular mail ? Please check the appropriate space.

(This answer will determine how we will contact you)

I understand that I am applying for a grant to help me to continue studying at or to enroll in a postsecondary education program or enrichment class. The information provided in the application is my own work and represents my thoughts. If I am selected to receive this grant, I am aware that I will need to provide documentation as to how and where my grant money will be spent. I verify that I meet the following eligibility requirements- I have Down syndrome and I am 18 years of age or older; and I intend to continue studying or enroll in a postsecondary program or enrichment course.

Your Signature _____ **Date** _____

Print Name _____

****If you are submitting this form electronically, typing your name in both spaces above is your agreement to the statement and is binding like your handwritten signature****

Questions About Me

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Answers should be brief.

- 1. Discuss any activities, hobbies and/or groups that you belong to or participate in. (You may not have an answer for all of these, and that is okay).**

I play the following sports:

I belong to the following clubs or religious groups:

I work at:

My other interests include:

- 2. What are two goals you have for your future? (These can be either personal or professional).**
- 3. I would like to take a class in...**

4. I want to take this class because...
5. How much money are you asking for? (Remember, the grant can not exceed \$1,000)
6. Which of the following will this money be used for? Check all that apply:
Tuition ___
Books ___
Supplies ___
Other Fees ___
Other ___

If Other, please describe what the money will be used for below:

7. Where would you like to take this class?

Name of school _____

City, State _____

Name of Class (if known) _____

8. Please include something with your application that will help us get to know you better. Examples of items you might consider submitting (you are not limited by this list!) include a photograph, an essay, a drawing, a painting, a poem, an article about you, a song you wrote or are performing, a short video, etc. Please do not submit more than three items. If you choose to submit an electronic piece (ex. video/audio clip), please make sure it is under 3 minutes and easily downloadable. Be creative!

9. Please write a short essay about yourself that answers the following question:
Why do you wish to pursue postsecondary education?

Please limit this essay to no more than one page, double spaced.

**The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund
Parent/Guardian Information**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Alternate Phone Number _____ (optional)

E-mail address _____

Relationship to the Applicant _____

Please discuss any assistance the applicant received in completing this application (This will not affect the grant decision process- we use this information to gauge how user-friendly the application is).

Do you have any suggestions to improve the clarity of this application and to make it more user-friendly?

I understand that _____ is applying for a grant to help financially with a postsecondary education program or enrichment course. If he/she is awarded this grant, I will help to ensure that he/she is able to attend the course. I understand that if awarded this grant, that documentation will need to be provided as to how and where the grant money will be spent. I certify that he/she meets the following eligibility criteria: has Down syndrome and is 18 years of age or older; and intends to continue studying or enroll in a postsecondary program or enrichment course.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

****If you are submitting this form electronically, typing your name in both spaces above is your agreement to the statement and is binding like your handwritten signature****

**The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund
Recommendation Letter**

ABOUT THE APPLICANT

Name _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

ABOUT THE PERSON WRITING THE RECOMMENDATION

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

Relationship to the Applicant _____

I have known the applicant for _____

Please use a separate piece of paper to discuss the following questions:

1. Describe your relationship with the applicant.
2. Describe why you feel the applicant would benefit from postsecondary education.
3. Describe the applicant's desire to learn, using examples from your relationship.

**These letters should be no more than one (1) page in length. Please e-mail
your recommendation letter, including this form to Erin Geller at
egeller@ndss.org no later than July 17 2009.**

**The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund
Recommendation Letter**

ABOUT THE APPLICANT

Name _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

ABOUT THE PERSON WRITING THE RECOMMENDATION

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail address _____

Relationship to the Applicant _____

I have known the applicant for _____

Please use a separate piece of paper to discuss the following questions:

1. Describe your relationship with the applicant.
2. Describe why you feel the applicant would benefit from postsecondary education.
3. Describe the applicant's desire to learn, using examples from your relationship.

**These letters should be no more than one (1) page in length. Please e-mail
your recommendation letter, including this form to Erin Geller at
egeller@ndss.org no later than July 17 2009.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are you asking for my Social Security number?

If you are awarded the grant, and would like the grant money paid directly to your school, we will need this information to deposit the grant into your student account. This number will not be used for any other purposes, but if you are uncomfortable giving us this information; you do not have to put it on the application. We will ask for the information later if you are awarded the grant and wish to have the money paid to your school.

Who can I ask to write a letter of recommendation for me?

A few examples of people you can ask are teachers, employers, coworkers, or religious leaders. It is preferred that your parents and other relatives (aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, cousins, etc.) do not write letters of recommendation for you. However, if you feel that a recommendation by a relative is needed for us to get a better sense of who you are or your accomplishments, you may submit a third recommendation by a relative, in addition to the two letters of recommendation by people who are not relatives. If you submit a letter of recommendation by a relative, you must include two additional letters of recommendation from people not related to you for your application to be considered.

What do I need to include in my application package?

You need to include the following: application; questions about me; something to help us get to know you better; one page essay; parent/guardian information; two (2) letters of recommendation; and your high school transcript or equivalent. All of these materials must be included for your application to be reviewed. If any of these sections are missing, we will be unable to consider your application.

When you ask for me to submit something that helps you get to know me better, what do you mean?

We would like you to submit an item that will give us some more information about you! We are asking for you to submit an item, such as an essay, photograph, painting, drawing, poem, performance, song or video that helps us learn more about you. Be creative! If you send us something electronic such as a video clip or audio file, please be sure it is under 3 minutes in length. If you send a CD or other electronic files with this material, please be sure that it is able to be downloaded to share with the committee. Whatever you send will not be returned, so please make sure you are okay with that before you send us anything.

Will the item I submit to help reviewers get to know me better be returned?

No. All submissions become property of NDSS and will not be returned. Please do not submit items that you will want back!

Can I still apply if I am in high school?

Yes, you can apply for this grant if you are still in high school, as long as you are over 18 years of age.

When is the deadline for applications?

All applications must be postmarked by **July 17, 2009**.

When will I find out if I will be awarded the grant?

You will receive an e-mail or letter letting you know if you got the grant no later than August 21, 2009. Please do not call about your application, as no information will be given over the phone.

If I am awarded the grant, how will I receive the grant money?

With proper documentation, NDSS can either send the money to your school or can reimburse you for tuition or other school costs that you paid. You must submit receipts for the tuition, books, materials or other that you would like to be paid by NDSS or reimbursed for. More information about getting the grant money will be sent to you if you are awarded the grant.

Will this grant be awarded again next year?

Yes! The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund will award grants on a yearly basis.

If I do not receive the grant this year, can I apply next year?

Yes, individuals who apply for the grant and are not chosen are eligible to apply again the following year.

If I received the grant last year, can I reapply this year?

Students who received the grant must wait one year before reapplying. For example, if you received the award in 2005, you would be eligible to reapply in 2007; and if you received the award in 2006, you would be eligible to reapply in 2008. This allows us to give everyone an equal opportunity for support.

If I have autism or another developmental or intellectual disability, can I apply for this grant?

No, currently this grant is only available to individuals with Down syndrome.

Executive Committee

Zeshan Tabani
Joshua O'Neill
Noah O'Neill
Tom O'Neill

Erin Geller, NDSS Staff