Empowering people with Down syndrome to pursue postsecondary opportunities

Since 2005, the National Down Syndrome Society’s O’Neill Tabani Enrichment Fund has been offering financial assistance to young adults with Down syndrome who are continuing to enrich their lives by taking classes or enrolling in postsecondary programs. As recipients of the O’Neill Tabani Enrichment Fund, the following eighteen students who have Down syndrome were awarded grants of up to $5,000 to help cover the cost of their postsecondary or enrichment courses.

**JENNIFER BARRETT, Ashland, MA – Berkshire Hills Music Academy**

Jennifer is very active in her community and finds volunteering with children to be especially meaningful. So much so that Jennifer’s goal is to become employed working in a kindergarten classroom, where she will teach students how to read, do math, and learn about music.

**DELTILYN BONAL, Yeadon, PA – Millersville University**

Born in Liberia, Deltilyn and her family moved to the United States when she was nine-years-old. She wants to take classes in photography and videography, and use her skills to tell the stories of others with disabilities.

**SHANIKA BONIPART, Charlotte, NC – Winthrop University**

Shanika is a talented singer and enjoys sharing her talent at her church. She is excited to be starting college and aspires to one day put her skills to use at a hospital, where she will help sick people feel better.

**ERIN BREWER, Frederick, CO – Front Range Community College**

Erin is excited to be going to college, just like her older sisters. She already has a strong command of American Sign Language but hopes to take college classes to help make her fluent. One day, Erin hopes to work as an assistant teacher in a preschool classroom.

**ANTHONY CONCEPCION, Oakton, VA – George Mason University Life Program**

Anthony is an active student and participates in many different programs. His hobbies include sports, collecting flashlights and playing musical instruments. He plans to one day have a job at a hotel.
JACOB GEHRINGER, Papillion, NE – Ollie Webb Center
Jacob has a passion for teaching math and reading. He is currently a para-aide in a preschool classroom. Jacob hopes that the courses he takes will make him the best para-aide he can be.

ANNE GRAVES, Marshall, NC – Western Carolina University
Anne is excited to fulfill her dream of going to college. She hopes to take classes that will help her to get a job in an office one day.

ERIN HAWLEY, Medina, OH – Kent State University
Erin is an accomplished athlete and cheerleader in her hometown. She’s hoping that the college classes she takes will help her to reach her goal of becoming a teacher.

COLLIN HAZELIP, Jacksonville, FL – University of North Florida
When not participating in multiple sports through Special Olympics, Collin is an accomplished public speaker. He hopes to study more psychology in his second year of college so that he can better understand behavior therapy for young students.

BROOKE HEBERT, Lafayette, LA – University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Brooke enjoys dancing, with the jitterbug and tango being her favorites. She is also a member of a sorority at the university she attends. Brooke would like to follow the example of many of her family members and one day work in a hospital.

MATTHEW HESSBURG, Grosse Pointe Park, MI – Western Carolina University
When he isn’t swimming laps with the swim club, Matthew’s biggest passion is cooking. He hopes to one day support himself in an independent life by opening his own restaurant where he is the chef.

JUSTIN ISAAC, Vero Beach, FL – University of Central Florida
A self-proclaimed sports fanatic, Justin enjoys participating in all kinds of sports, including swimming and wakeboarding. In addition to advocating for increased programs and services for individuals with Down syndrome, Justin plans to work in a nursing home as a recreational assistant.
KELSIE LAYMAN, Jackson, TN – Union University
A lover of music, Kelsie loves singing in her church choir. She hopes to learn the guitar so that she may someday write her own music and also teach music classes to young students.

KAYLA MCAULIFFE, Colchester, CT – Riverview School
Kayla is excited to go to college so that she may learn more about animals. She hopes to one day work in a veterinary hospital or animal shelter. In her free time, Kayla is a dedicated cheerleader and was even voted co-captain in her senior year.

JUSTIN MOORE, New Haven, CT – Chapel Haven
Justin is an athlete participating in basketball, soccer, softball, sailing and bowling. In addition to sports, Justin has a great passion for art. He hopes continue his art studies in college.

JARED OKUN, Fayetteville, NY – Otsego Academy at Pathfinder Village
Jared is a member of Special Olympics where he loves to play basketball. He also loves to sing. He hopes that one day he will be able to have a career in music. He’s so happy with college as he is able to hang out with his friends.

TYLER SATTLER, Palm Beach Gardens, FL – Florida Atlantic University
Tyler has been involved with Special Olympics for over 10 years and even went to the state competition in bowling. He is excited to go to college and to learn how to live independently.

PAIGE SODERMAN, Asheville, NC – Western Carolina University
An avid swimmer, Paige has been swimming with Special Olympics for 12 years, a practice she will continue with her college’s club team. She is hoping that the classes she takes at college will help her in her future jobs.

The mission of the National Down Syndrome Society is to be the national advocate for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. NDSS 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. To learn more, visit www.ndss.org.