Meet Past Recipients

Paul "Andy", 2006 Recipient
Andy was born in southern California to a Hispanic family lacking education or opportunity. Andy and his sister lived with their mother, who suffered from mental illness. As a result, the family struggled with poverty, homelessness, and impulsive moving. Eventually, Andy and his sister were placed in foster care until his father was awarded custody and moved them to Mexico to live with him. Andy did well in school, and in 8th grade, he was accepted into the Better Chance Program and moved to Rochester to finish his education. Following high school, Andy pursued his dream of becoming an Architect at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Mary, 2008 Recipient
Mary was born in Sudan and lived with her parents and brother until the family’s life was shattered by the war. The rebel forces captured her father to fight in the war and he was ultimately killed after repeated attempts to escape. Her mother was then seized by rebel forces on suspicion of aiding her husband, and she was tortured and killed as well. A neighbor rescued Mary and her brother and they were taken in by her grandmother. However, with the perilous conditions in Sudan, Mary and her brother would not be safe. An uncle took the children to the United States to provide them with a more secure home. Living in Fargo, North Dakota, Mary faced discrimination and came to hate school. It was not until moving to Rochester that Mary began to feel at home and embraced the education available to her. Mary attended Century High School and participated in RCTC’s Upward Bound Program. After graduation, Mary planned to pursue a career in healthcare in order to return to Sudan and help others.

Jennie, 2011 Recipient
When Jennie was merely fifteen years old, she was raped and nearly killed while walking home from work. Following the tragic incident, Jennie coped with the physical and emotional pain that ensued, contemplating suicide more than once. Yet Jennie did not succumb to the deep scars and psychological trauma of the event. She testified against her attacker, playing an important role in putting him away for the rest of his life. Recognizing the impact of her story, Jennie has realized that she can make a difference in the lives of other victims of crime by pursuing a career as a Crime Victims’ Advocate and motivational speaker. A graduate of John Marshall, Jennie began her educational journey at Augsburg College.

“I feel this scholarship has given me all these opportunities to continue to pursue my dream. Thank you Beat the Odds.”
Tamara, 2000 Beat the Odds Recipient

“I am so thankful that I received this scholarship. Thanks to everyone who organized this program to help and encourage recipients.”
Adam, 2002 Beat the Odds Recipient

“This scholarship meant success for me. It told me I could achieve.”
Joyce, 2004 Beat the Odds Recipient

“Financially, I wasn’t able to go to college. Now with this scholarship, I can go to college.”
Samantha, 2006 Beat the Odds Recipient

“Beat the Odds Scholarship proved to me that I can ‘Beat the Odds’ and dared me to attend one of the top institutions in the United States.”
Sandy, 2009 Beat the Odds Recipient
Beat the Odds is a scholarship and fundraising program that honors high school seniors who have faced considerable challenges and obstacles in their young lives, yet have achieved personal and academic success. The purpose of the program is to raise awareness to the struggles of many youth in our community and recognize their ability to overcome difficulties.

Despite significant odds, such as personal or family hardships, disabilities, poverty, neglect, chemical dependency or language and cultural barriers, these individuals have persevered and begun a path of personal achievements. As their path leads them toward higher education, they are provided with a $2,500 scholarship to the accredited college of their choice.

Besides recognizing these inspiring young students, Beat the Odds also pays tribute to the adults who detected the struggles and reached out with encouragement, advice, resources and support.

Beat the Odds was founded by the Children’s Defense Fund and was brought to the RCTC Foundation by Senator Sheila Kiscaden in 2000. Since its inception, our Beat the Odds has provided $178,000 in scholarships to over 100 students. Proceeds from the event not only provide these inspiring students with scholarships, they also benefit the Children’s Defense Fund of Minnesota and supply the RCTC Foundation with resources to administer scholarships and support RCTC programs.

Application Process

To be eligible for a Beat the Odds Scholarship, students must:
- Be SENIOR in a Rochester, MN (or surrounding area) high school by Fall 2014
- Be on track to graduate from high school prior to July 2015
- Plan to attend an accredited post-secondary school for Fall 2015

Eligible students must be nominated by an adult that can attest to their ability to overcome struggles. A completed application includes:
- Nominator Form and letter of recommendation
- Student Application form and 1-2 page essay
- High School Transcript

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 3, 2014**

A selection committee will review each application and narrow down the pool of applicants. Each remaining candidate will be asked to participate in a taped interview and based upon those interviews, four students will be selected by mid-December to receive a $2,500 scholarship. Additional scholarships in smaller amounts may be offered.

**Application materials can be found on our website at:**

www.rctc.edu/foundation

Send application materials to:

RCTC Foundation
Attn: Beat the Odds
851 30th Ave. SE
Rochester, MN 55904

Award Ceremony

The selected Beat the Odds recipients will be recognized at the 15th Annual Award Ceremony in January.

Recipients, their nominators, and important people in their lives will be formally interviewed and videotaped prior to the award ceremony to create a production for the event.

Recipients and their nominators are expected to attend the ceremony and represent Beat the Odds in media and publicity prior to the event. Students may invite two family members to attend the event with them. Additional tickets may be purchased.

The Beat the Odds event will also be attended by Rochester area businesses and community leaders that sponsor Beat the Odds and help to fund the scholarships.

**Thursday, January 15, 2015**

Rochester International Event Center
7333 Airport View Drive SW
Rochester, MN 55902

The evening will begin with a social hour and silent auction at 5:00 p.m., followed by dinner and the award ceremony.