

Scholarship Stories

These are a few of the many early learning scholarship success stories

THOMAS, A SINGLE FATHER IN ROSEVILLE, MN

I am raising my daughter as a single father. Since my work is seasonal, I can't always afford to pay for her childcare out of pocket. This early learning scholarship has given my daughter the opportunity to readily prepare for kindergarten like the rest of the children her age. Without it, my daughter would not be able to attend the Wilder Child Development Center, **where I chose to send her because of the great things I heard about the high-quality early learning program.** Now that I'm here, I see they're all true. **As a single father, I feel accepted here.** The program believes in parent engagement. The teachers want me to be involved in my daughter's education. On top of that, my daughter has many nurturing female role models at the Wilder Childhood Development Center. It's important to me that my daughter has women by her side to assist in her development as a whole person. The teachers bring out her beauty, positive self-esteem and academic potential. This scholarship allows for stability in my daughter's education, and ultimately, our family. We both love and are thankful for this scholarship.



STEPHANIE, A MOTHER OF 3 IN RICHFIELD, MN

Being that my family is very low-income, we were unable to afford any childcare for my son William. On top of that, I am very ill with Lyme disease and other illnesses and also the primary caregiver for my 92 year-old mother-in-law. William would often have to wait with me at many doctor's offices, spending more times in waiting rooms than any preschooler should. Sometimes I was unable to bring William with me and would have to piecemeal together babysitters or miss appointments altogether. **William never knew where he would be from day to day.** With his early learning scholarship, William is able to attend a secure, consistent early learning environment of my choice every day. He is involved in child-centered activities and has peers to interact with. He can engage in creative play, art, group time and more quality early learning activities! I can already tell William is getting prepared for kindergarten because he is learning new things! On the days that I don't have medical appointments, I am now able to get the doctor-ordered daily rest so that I can get better. My recovery is very important to the well-being of our entire family and this scholarship is a very real contributing factor. I want desperately to get back to being the mom that I want to be.

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ERIKA, PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR IN ISANTI, MN

I am writing to congratulate and thank the supporters of Parent Aware! **The difference you have made for myself as a director is huge, but it doesn't come close to the differences you have made for my families that are receiving this support.** Now parents walk in to my center happy, instead of worried or scared because they cannot afford to pay their child's tuition. In the past, parents would drop off or pick up their children quickly and then sprint back out the door. This created a communication problem as we missed out on sharing fun and important details of their child's day. Now we have the time to discuss with parents areas of concern or excitement. This communication has created a line of trust between parents and staff, allowing vital information to be shared on a regular basis. Something as simple as "my daughter didn't have time to eat breakfast" is solved with a granola bar versus a morning filled with meltdowns, arguments, and frustration only to learn hours into the day that the child is simply hungry. Additionally, our families are now more likely to attend on a regular basis, where in the past kids would come sporadically. This gives the teacher a better picture of how the student is progressing, allowing them to create a plan to ensure they are obtaining the needed skills for kindergarten. With regular attendance and trust, parents and teacher are able to openly engage, discuss concerns and create solutions together.

Though highly successful, too few scholarship are available. More than 15,000 children are still in need of scholarships.



KASEY, A SINGLE MOTHER IN SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS, MN – an eligible family that was denied a scholarship

When I applied for an early learning scholarship, I received a letter that said I was denied due to the limited amount of funding available. After my mother passed away a few years ago, my dad, my daughter Raija and I were homeless. I was then able to purchase my parent's house and am currently taking care of my dad, who tries to help out with Raija, but is very old. Currently I'm working as a waitress. I graduated with an Associate's degree in Human Services and am trying to go back to school. We try as hard as we can to make ends mean and not rely on other people, but I feel that high-quality education is so important for my daughter Raija. She

loves Mayflower Early Childhood Center and fits in perfectly. I can see that she's learning new things all the time.