



Audi Gerstein Scholarship





Bethany Cucka

\$1,000 Scholarship Recipient



“In 2011 I walked towards my finish line – towards the end of what will be known as the year I was both immobilized, and as the year I moved. As I watched my legs beneath me, I was overcome by my own strength. My legs were supported by my successes. Instead of burning calories, I was fueled by the straight A’s on my report card. With each step I took, I pictured the faces of my coaches, my friends, my family – all the people who sponsored me to participate in the 2k Walk-A-Thon in Albany. I pictured the face of another 16 year old girl with ITP who will now have access to blood transfusions because I have helped to fund research and treatments. It is this day, a hidden gem nestled within the wide range of my community service activities, which emulates the person I am and the person I strive to be.”





Maureen Reigert

\$100 Book Award



“Having a blood disorder gave me first hand knowledge of what a patient goes through while being diagnosed and treated. This allowed me to see how hospitals worked and what the different roles of the doctors, nurses, assistants , and social workers were. Being in the infusion clinic at Children’s hospital also gave me a glimpse into how many children have different disorders that affect their lives in varying degrees. Because of this understanding and my love for science and discovery, I realized that I wanted to help other children like myself in their understanding and treatment of disease and disorders. Having a medical disorder myself will help me as a future doctor because I have an empathy of what patients are going through. One of the main reasons why I want to be a doctor is to be able to give back in a way similar to those who have given their time and efforts in helping me.”





Mary Kate Miller

\$100 Book Award



“Having a diagnosis that does not contain a clear path of treatment is discouraging to say the least. The feeling of hopelessness that followed trips to the hospital, and countless failed trials on medications only became greater upon realizing everything that was secure in my life spun into a whirlwind of uncertainty. It was at this moment that I was unsure if I could finish my undergraduate career, let alone pursue my goals in becoming a clinical psychologist. Having all of these thoughts protrude and ruminate through my mind quickly took it’s toll and left me in a daze of ambiguity.

Reflecting back, I understood at that point my life was going to be composed of a new journey and I was going to either accept it and make the best, or wither away in resentment towards this disease.

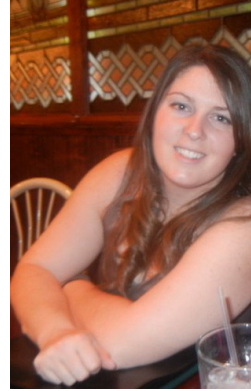
Since this is a diagnosis I am going to be living with for a long time, I will not let it define who I am as a person, nor will it stand in the way of my aspirations.”





Meghan Reid

\$100 Book Reward



“Allowing myself to accept this disease as part of my life let me embrace the second part of the graduate application process. Traveling to interviews all over the United States while in the process of regulating my platelet levels was frightening, yet I know I could not let this disease crush my dreams. Maintaining this philosophy through interviews, hospital trips and countless needle sticks has landed me where I am today.

Reaching towards my goals, by denying ITP the ability to deter me has guided me to a positive career involving abetting people in need that suffer from chronic illness. I am no longer afraid to start my new life in graduate school due to my strength in conquering the lifelong diagnosis of chronic ITP”.

