



HONORING THE LEGACY

**ADA S. MCKINLEY
COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.**

REVIE SOREY TRUNK SCHOLARSHIPS

2020 Essay Winners

As part of our Trunk Scholarship selection process, applicants are asked to submit a short essay expressing why a post-secondary education is important to them. In addition to a college trunk containing the things they need to begin their college journey, the top three essay winners receive a cash award in the form of a gift card to help cover other fees and incidentals. Congratulations to this year's winners!

**Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Inc.
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2020 ESSAY WINNERS

Revie Sorey Trunk Scholarships



First Place Winner

Jamiyah Roberta Lee

Graduate of Hyde Park Academy

Attending Harold Washington College

I loathe public transportation. The cramped seating, shrills of children, and laggard movement of a 40,000-pound vehicle feels unpleasant to me. Trying to reach my destination, but a victim to constant halts by other passengers who seem oblivious to my internal dilemma. Do they understand that I feel differently from them? Do they understand that my “social battery” simply can’t compete with theirs? This is life with social anxiety. To others, a minor difficulty, but to me, a crucial aspect of daily life.

My anxiety temporarily halted my dreams of being an accountant due to the emphasis on communicating with others. I felt that hope was lost, and I should just give up - until, I truly began to listen to what my body was saying. This changed my outlook. My symptoms only flared when I was engulfed in negative situations or surrounded by individuals who didn’t serve my best interests, like a bully.

Now knowing my triggers, I was able to remove myself from environments that didn’t help me grow. Instead of covering away from raising my hand in class, I participated with outstretched fingers, booming voice, and a bright smile. I volunteered to be a leader at school and beyond. Through guiding others and taking chances, my anxiety began to diminish. I gained confidence in myself when speaking, and took leadership roles in organizations that I participated in. I served as chairwoman in my social justice group, Southside Together Organizing for Power, and interned at the Obama Foundation through a program called Urban Alliance.

Going to college will be the change that I need, so I know that I will be successful in my endeavors. This is what social anxiety tried to tell me wasn’t possible. Knowing this, I will always try my hardest, and follow my passion to become the unstoppable woman that I was meant to be. Majoring in Finance will be the catalyst to accomplishing my goals because its foundation is firmly set in ingenuity. Studying finance will be the launchpad for me to complete my goals and pull my single-parent family out of poverty.

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Second Place Winner

Lela Kaitlyn Amber Sommerio

**Graduate of Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School
Attending Howard University**

Obtaining a post-secondary education is essential to me because I am a life long learner, and education has encompassed my life to make it better. Before I was born into the world, education, child development, and learning were my soundtrack. My mom was 8 months pregnant with me but determined to complete her school practicum at Ada S. McKinley Child Development Center in 2002. Little did she know that she found a place to complete her education and start my education in one.

At six weeks old I attended the facility and it provided me a strong educational foundation. I learned how to use sign language before I could talk. I learned to play with others, believe in myself, sing, dance and was even potty trained in this nurturing environment. It was at Ada S. McKinley that I had a clear understanding of how important education was to me and how it would be a catalyst to propel me into the field of education later in life.

Throughout my school career, I held on to my educational foundation and remembered to believe in myself when things got rough. I have relied on my education to reach the sky and achieve things beyond my years. I am now an honor student in high school, a certified pharmacy tech, and an after school teacher who has been accepted into her dream college, Howard University. I plan to major in child development and obtaining a post-secondary education in this field. It will definitely bring my life full circle and help me achieve ALL of my goals and that is important to me.

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Third Place Winner

Destiny Nyah Williams

**Graduate of Wendell Phillips Academy High School
Attending Jackson State University**

Obtaining a post-secondary education is important to me because I will be the first woman in my family to graduate high school and go to college. All my life, I've always wanted to go to college and break the curse that my family has. I am proud that I am able to do so.

The people who inspired me along the way are my great-grandmother. My grandmother was also a graduate of Phillips. She couldn't go to college because she was married and had children at the age of 21. My grandmother is my biggest supporter and she motivated me to keep pushing and obtain my goal. I owe her everything because, without her, I will not graduate this year, let alone going to college.

I want to major in criminal justice at Jackson State University to become a criminal defense lawyer so that I can come back to my hometown of Chicago and change the criminal justice system here. My career path was driven by my father, who died when I was 8 years old due to gun violence. His case is unsolved and it is very frustrating for me. There are a lot of unsolved murders in Chicago and I want that to stop. Social justice is so important to me because I want the world to change for the better; especially the city that I was born and raised in. This may be a hard task but I believe that it is for the betterment of the city.

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