

February 2008
Step Up For Students Student Spotlight:



Brandon Judd
Indian Rocks Christian School
Largo

Brandon Judd is a sophomore at Indian Rocks Christian School in Largo, a school he has attended for the past two years on the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program. His parent-selected school has provided him with the support to help him overcome his learning barriers and build an educational foundation for a successful future.

Brandon attended public school for eight years before receiving the scholarship. When he entered middle school he became unmotivated in school and would struggle with completing his homework. He began to have a difficult time in his classes, especially in the critical areas of math and English. As a result, his grades in his classes declined to C's, D's and even F's. With his grades dropping to the point of failure, Brandon's future was in jeopardy.

Dawn Judd, Brandon's mother, was determined to help her son and searched for alternatives to his current school. She found the perfect academic setting for her children at Indian Rocks Christian School (IRCS), a ministry of the First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks, which is a church Dawn and her children had been attending for several years. IRCS had a great reputation, but as a single parent with a limited income, she knew she could not afford the tuition. However, when she learned about the Step Up For Students Scholarships offered by Florida P.R.I.D.E., she knew she had found her answer. Both Brandon and his sister Lindsay were approved for scholarships and began attending Indian Rocks Christian the next school year.

Upon entering IRCS at the beginning of his ninth grade year, Brandon and his mother met with the guidance counselor and principal to assess Brandon's strengths and weaknesses and work on a plan that would help him get back on track. Brandon's dedicated teachers immediately worked with him to overcome his difficulties, especially in math and reading. He was also assigned a student accountability partner to encourage him to complete his homework. He also joined the school's varsity soccer team, with a coach that was willing to provide corrective actions to help improve Brandon's academic performance.

The proactive efforts of the school staff, along with his mother's active involvement and Brandon's determination, have made a significant difference over the past two years. Brandon, who was once a student who struggled to pass his classes, now brings home report cards that are full of A's, including above average grades in math, a subject that he was previously failing. His experience at IRCS has also opened the doors for other opportunities, including attending a mission trip in England. He also joined the high school student ministry and the Solid Rock Company Sketch Comedy Team, which has given him the opportunity to help younger children with academics and sports.

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Now in the 10th grade, Brandon has already begun to work on a plan for his future. After graduation, Brandon aspires to go to college to pursue a career as a veterinarian, a dream he has had since he was only three years old! His solid academic achievements and determination are strong indicators that he will succeed in all he sets out to achieve.

Dawn Judd is grateful to Step Up For Students for giving her the ability to send her children to a school with a positive learning environment and personalized support that has spurred the growth and development of their academics and character.

About Indian Rocks Christian School

A ministry of the First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks, Indian Rocks Christian School currently serves 833 students in grades Kindergarten through 12th, 32 of which are Step Up For Students recipients. The school annually administers the Stanford Achievement Test. The annual cost of tuition is \$5,450 for Kindergarten; \$5,750 for grades 1-5; \$6,050 for grades 6-8; \$6,275 for ninth grade; \$6,450 for 10th grade; \$6,650 for 11th grade; and \$6,875 for 12th grade.

About the Step Up For Students Scholarship Recipients

The typical Step Up For Students scholarship family has an average income of \$24,489 for a family of four, and more than 60 percent of the scholarship recipients come from single-parent homes. The typical scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. They are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and care about their future, look for viable options. Parents apply for Step Up For Students Scholarships so their children can attend the school best suited for their special needs, beliefs, and abilities, and to address negative trends in their child's learning skills and/or environment.

Step Up For Students Scholarships are funded by corporations that redirect up to 75 percent of their corporate state income tax liability to a qualified Scholarship Funding Organization in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. For more information or to learn how your corporation can participate in the program, visit www.StepUpForStudents.com, or call 1-800 782-9140 for more information.

Other ways you can support Step Up For Students. Monetary donations and grants from individuals, foundations and other organizations are vital to the scholarship program. Because 100 percent of the CTC funds must be used for scholarships, there is no allowance in the law to cover program costs associated with administering and distributing the scholarships. Program costs are funded by generous individuals and foundations that believe in equipping all of Florida's children with the educational tools for a successful future. It only costs the Step Up For Students scholarship funding organizations \$50 to administer each scholarship. Because each donation is matched 100 percent by the Walton Family Foundation, a donation of only \$25 will provide \$3,750 scholarship to a low-income child. For more information, call 1 (866) 344-9553 or visit www.stepupforstudents.com/donors.htm.

