

Students with Disabilities from Across Florida Receive The Able Trust RISE Scholarships

Awards presented to 34 students in 17 counties to support transitions from high school to college, technical education and other career training

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, June 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Able Trust](#) is proud to announce that 34 high school students with disabilities from all across Florida have been awarded the Road to Independence and Success in Education (RISE) Scholarship, recognizing their achievements and supporting their next steps in education and career development.

The recipients of the RISE Scholarships were chosen from a pool of applicants who participate in The Able Trust's [High School High Tech](#) program. This program for students with disabilities has a 30+ year history of helping students successfully transition to college, technical education, and other training opportunities that support long-term career success.

RISE Scholarships were awarded to graduating students from the High School High Tech chapters in Broward, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gulf, Hillsborough, Lake, Leon, Levy, Madison, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Polk, Putnam and Taylor counties. Each scholarship covers one full year of tuition or credit-hour costs at a Florida state college or technical school, and may also be applied toward tuition at a Florida state university.

Scholar Voices and Highlights

"Growing up with a disability wasn't easy. I still remember the nights in elementary school when my mom and I would cry together because I struggled so much with reading and understanding



Five of the 34 students across Florida who were awarded The Able Trust Road to Independence and Success in Education (RISE) Scholarships



These scholarships are more than financial aid; they are indicators of confidence and catalysts for change."

Allison Chase, President & CEO, The Able Trust

my lessons. But with the support of my family and teachers, I overcame those challenges and learned to believe in myself. Those memories motivate me to help future students feel seen, supported, and capable of success."

- Lia Cordova-Diaz, Hillsborough County. Lia will attend Hillsborough College to pursue a career as an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teacher.

"High School High Tech has really shaped me into the person I am today. I have learned not to be ashamed of my disability and see it more as what makes me unique. As time goes by and I continue to grow, I have learned that my differences are not a weakness, but rather, more what shapes me to the person that I am today."

- Wilneisy Contreras, Orange County. Contreras will attend Orange Technical College to pursue a career as a Certified Nurse-Midwife.

"Early in my life my family discovered that I was born with ADHD and autism, so I have had more challenges in school than other students ... During a High School High Tech tour of Florida A&M University, the people were very welcoming and didn't make me feel small. I felt like I had finally found the college for me."

- William Turnau, Leon County. Turnau will attend Florida A&M University to pursue a career in art and writing.

"At the age of 9 I was diagnosed with a chromosome two deletion. Students picked on me through middle and high school due to my height. This really affects one's confidence in themselves ... High School High Tech helped me build confidence in myself and sparked my interest in continuing my education. This is something I never thought would be possible for me."

- Jackson Russell, Nassau County. Russell will attend Florida State College-Jacksonville and enroll in the Northeast Florida Builders Association's Apprenticeship Program to pursue a career as a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) technician.

"This opportunity offers both the financial freedom and the inspiring community I need to fully dedicate myself to my education. I feel empowered to achieve my lifelong dream of becoming a nurse, allowing me to turn my passion for medicine into a career focused on healing, comforting, and lifting up others when they need it most."

- Myra Jerome, Broward County. Jerome will attend Miami-Dade College to pursue a career in nursing.

The need for programs supporting students with disabilities during the transition from high school remains significant. According to the latest available statewide data, just 29.3% of Florida's

graduating students with disabilities enroll in postsecondary education after earning their high school diplomas.

By contrast, 61% of High School High Tech graduates reported plans to enroll in postsecondary education following graduation during the 2024–25 school year.

“High School High Tech helps students with disabilities learn that college and career success are achievable goals, but many families still face significant challenges when it comes to paying for postsecondary training,” said Allison Chase, President and CEO of The Able Trust. “These scholarships are more than financial aid; they are indicators of confidence and catalysts for change.”

[Learn more about the RISE Scholarship recipients here.](#)

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About The Able Trust

Established in 1990 as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, The Able Trust supports the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation by helping Floridians with disabilities achieve employment. Through partnerships with school districts, education foundations, and local nonprofits, The Able Trust prepares students with disabilities for life after high school. The Able Trust’s youth programs, including High School High Tech, help students with disabilities explore career and postsecondary options and build confidence for their futures.

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