

<http://aapress.com/education/scholarships/four-minneapolis-students-and-one-st-paul-student-were-named-2010-gates-millennium-scholars/>

Four Minneapolis students and one St. Paul student were named 2010 Gates Millennium Scholars.

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Patrick Henry High School students named Gates Millennium Scholars, Susan Vang, Steve Lindley and Soua Chang. (Contributed photo)

Though it has been a couple days since senior Soua Chang received the prestigious scholarship, her voice is still hoarse from joy.

"When I received the Gates package, I was really nervous. And when I opened it, it said 'Congratulations,'" said Chang, a senior at Patrick Henry High School in Minneapolis. "I was screaming so much that now my throat hurts. I was definitely really happy."

The scholarship is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and gives students a full ride to college, even covering the cost of a doctorate degree in some fields of study. Recipients have an average five-year graduation rate of almost 80 percent, 45 percent higher than the six-year rate for all college students. In addition to financial assistance, recipients receive academic support, mentoring and leadership training.

Chang said she is grateful for the application help she received in Admission Possible, a college prep program in the Greater Twin Cities that serves low-income students. While working on her application for the Gates Scholarship, Chang was going through a lot at home and doubted she could ever win the award.

"My Admission Possible coach Steve helped me and encouraged me by giving me pep talks and just being there for me," Chang said.

With Steve's support, Chang finished her application and the scholarship has put her dream school, Concordia College, within financial reach.

Pa Chia Xiong, a senior at Community of Peace Academy High School, has been named a 2010 Gates Millennium Scholarship winner. Nationwide, more than 25,000 high school seniors applied for the award, but Xiong was one of only 1,000 chosen to receive the prestigious scholarship, awarded through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

As a Gates Millennium Scholar, Xiong said she will now be able to attend Mills College, a nationally renowned independent liberal arts college for women located in Oakland, Calif.

Xiong began attending Community of Peace Academy in the 5th grade. She currently holds a 3.71 GPA, and has participated in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities including Model United Nations, science club, Japanese club, and art club.

Xiong is a volunteer peer mediator, and helps 3rd and 4th graders in the Community of Peace Academy Elementary School. She also participated in the National Teen Leadership Program last summer, and has been enrolled in the Admission Possible program for the past two years.

Doua Kha, Mai Vang, Soua Chang and Susan Vang of Patrick Henry High School were among six Minneapolis Public Schools students and 1,000 scholars nationwide that were selected as recipients of the Gates Millennium Scholars or the United Negro College Fund Program.

Fadumo Abdullahi and Abdullahi Ali of Edison High School also received scholarships.

The Class of 2010 Gates Millennium Scholars represent 45 states, the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories: American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This year, 10 Admission Possible students have received national recognition through their selection for the competitive Gates Millennium Scholarship, bringing the total number of Admission Possible Students who have won the award since it began to 28.

Each one of the more than 600 current Admission Possible seniors has worked diligently to complete scholarship applications. **The students have been awarded more than 100 scholarships to date, including the nationally recognized Horatio Alger Scholarship.**

“Paying for college can be an overwhelming obstacle for high school seniors, and especially for low-income students,” said Jim McCorkell, Admission Possible CEO and founder. “Scholarships are one more step toward making college possible for our students. For our students to win such prestigious awards is an honor not only for them but also for Admission Possible.”

In addition to national scholarships, Admission Possible students apply to many state and local opportunities. **Thirty-one of the 42 Horatio Alger scholarships awarded in Minnesota – made possible by the Carl & Eloise Pohlad Family Foundation – went to Admission Possible seniors.**

“The 20,000 young men and women who will attend college as Gates Millennium Scholars will make a major contribution to helping the United States fulfill President Obama’s goal of regaining for America world leadership in the proportion of citizens with college degrees,” said Michael L. Lomax, Ph. D., UNCF President and CEO. “The Gates Millennium Scholars Program is an investment in both the futures of these students and the country’s economic and social strength and competitiveness.”

UNCF’s management of the Gates Millennium Scholars Program is a partnership with the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund to serve Gates Millennium Scholars in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Of all the ways to increase opportunities for lower-income youth, education is the most important,” said Margaret Daniels Tyler, Senior Program Officer at the Gates Foundation. “By supporting a diverse cadre of students to earn their degrees, we can help develop the next generation of leaders in communities across the country. That is what the Gates Millennium Scholars Program is all about.”