



## Mission & Goals

At Ruby's Rainbow, we grant scholarships to adults with Down syndrome in the U.S. who are seeking post-secondary education, enrichment or vocational classes.

Our mission is to support these inspiring individuals in achieving their dreams of higher education while spreading awareness of their capabilities and general awesomeness!

Today, there are more college and university programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities than ever before. Students with Down syndrome are helping to change the educational landscape, and Ruby's Rainbow is committed to keeping pace with these ever-increasing educational opportunities.

We are passionate about supporting students with Down syndrome as they pursue their college dreams!

## Eligibility Criteria

**Ruby's Rainbow scholarship applicants must meet the following criteria:**

- This scholarship is for individuals with Down syndrome, living in the United States, who are 18 years of age or older.
- Applicants must have the desire and intent to enroll or continue enrollment in a class or program that will enhance their lives through employment, independent living or life skills, or interests in any other areas.
- Applicants must provide a high school diploma, transcript or equivalent. A college transcript or letter from the program is also acceptable.
- Individuals who have previously been awarded a Ruby's Rainbow scholarship may apply again the following year by filling out our Re-Apply Application.

**About Ruby's Rainbow scholarships:**

- Ruby's Rainbow Scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per awarded individual, subject to availability of funds.
- Scholarship funds must be used within one year.
- This scholarship must be used to pay for tuition for a post-secondary program at a college, educational institution, or employment training program. A portion may also be used to pay for books, supplies or other related expenses, but the majority of the grant must be used for tuition.

Visit [RubysRainbow.org](https://RubysRainbow.org)  
and click on **Apply** to get started

## Fun Facts

After being entirely volunteer-run for its first four years, Ruby's Rainbow took on its first full-time Executive Director — Liz Plachta, co-founder and mom to Ruby — in 2016 to meet the demands of this rapidly expanding organization. Three years later, the organization took on a part-time administrative employee for further help in fulfilling its mission. Due to continued growth, the organization now has three part-time employees to further help in fulfilling its mission.

Still largely volunteer-run, Ruby's Rainbow is made up of parents, family members and friends of people who happen to be rockin' that extra chromosome. Everyone involved with Ruby's Rainbow is passionate about spreading the word about these amazing and capable individuals.

In its first 13 years, Ruby's Rainbow has granted 883 scholarships totaling over 3.2 million dollars. We look forward to continuing our mission for many years to come, and helping more individuals with Down syndrome achieve their dreams of higher education and independence.

Ruby's Rainbow is based in Austin, Texas, yet our Rockin' Recipients come from all over the United States, and attend courses and educational programs at colleges and universities across the country.



## Rockin' Recipients



**Jessica Giddens** — Jessica is a three-time Rockin' Recipient who graduated from the ClemsonLIFE program. While at Clemson, she studied independent living, took acting classes and joined a sorority. She also mastered her independent-living skills and now lives independently. Her post-graduation goals include moving to California, becoming an author, building a career in the film industry, and finding true love.

**Sujay Koli** — Sujay is a three-time Rockin' Recipient attending the Ready For Life Academy at Ferris State University, where he is studying marketing along with career and independent living skills. Sujay's hobbies include listening to music, biking, and watching TV. He is very proud to have earned his driver's license learner's permit recently. After graduation, he hopes to have a career in the field of marketing. He says, "Making people happy is my special strength."



**Raquel Caramello** — Raquel is attending the University of South Florida — St. Pete UMATTER Program where she will live on campus, take college courses, and gain work experience. She is a cancer survivor and started a jewelry business that inspires people to not give up during hard times. She wants to take business classes to learn how she can grow her skillset and possibly expand her business into fashion. She also loves volunteering, helping others and doing random acts of kindness!



## How It All Started

In December 2010, a little girl named Ruby Plachta was born in Austin, Texas — a month early, and rockin' a surprise extra 21st chromosome. Liz and Tim, her parents, realized their hopes and expectations for Ruby were just the same as for their older daughter: They envisioned both their children becoming lifelong learners and making meaningful contributions to society.

The Plachtas knew they wanted to do something extraordinary to help this community of inspiring people. But while post-secondary educational opportunities were expanding for individuals with Down syndrome, Liz and Tim learned that educational funding for these students was nearly non-existent.

Founded in 2012, Ruby's Rainbow grew out of the Plachtas' belief that everyone is a lifelong learner, and that learning does not — and should not — stop after high school.



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