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In this busy season of proms and graduations, awards nights and athletic banquets, more than 1,000 Twin Cities students marked their calendars for the 8th Annual Admission Possible Year-End Graduation Celebration which took place Saturday, May 30, at the University of Minnesota's Ted Mann Concert Hall.

Of the 620 Twin Cities-area seniors who participated in Admission Possible's two-year college preparatory program, 96% of them have already been admitted to at least one college for next year, after working steadily to reach important deadlines, arrange for financial aid, receive admission letters, and make an informed decision. For the many Admission Possible students who will be the first members of their families to attend college, this is an accomplishment well worth a celebration.

"This annual event is truly remarkable," said Jim McCorkell, founder and CEO of Admission Possible. "This is a significantly larger senior class than we have had in previous years, and as they celebrate their college-going plans for the fall, our juniors – and recently accepted sophomores – witness that success and can begin to imagine it for themselves. It is an inspiring day!"

Though low-income students across the country will enter college at less than one-third the rate of their wealthier peers [Post Secondary Education Opportunity, June 2006], the energy and excitement among the more than 1,000 students that attended the Saturday event served to

challenge that statistic as it applies to them. Thanks to the dedication of the Admission Possible AmeriCorps members who coach them throughout the year, and the commitment and hard work of the students, there were seemingly endless individual accomplishments to celebrate this spring.

“Admission Possible has opened doors that I would have never seen myself walking through,” said Michael Roberts, Admission Possible student and St. Paul Harding senior, who will attend Augustana College in the fall. “Most members of my family never went to college, so by doing so, I hope to change my family’s ways for the better. I want my children and their kids to attend college, and break away from that way of life. I just want them and everyone else to know that there is a better life out there and that they can have it.”

Fox 9 broadcast journalist and news anchor Robyne Robinson was the keynote speaker at the Saturday graduation. Robinson, invited by Admission Possible as a highly visible and hard working role model in the community, is the first African American to anchor a local prime-time newscast and first African American woman appointed senior anchor at a Twin Cities news organization.

"You're getting ready to become members of the world,” Robinson told Admission Possible students. “Believe in all that you have in yourself, but don't just keep it for yourself,; you've also got to reach back and help everyone else out. Change doesn't happen with a big shovel. It happens with a teaspoon and each of you carry one."

In addition to celebrating the seniors’ plans, much of the day featured student presentations in the form of skits and other live performances, many of them were gestures of appreciation, while others were a glimpse of the hopes and concerns that seniors have about their college careers ahead.

The year-end graduation ceremony was also a time for students, AmeriCorps members, staff, and community supporters to welcome the newly-admitted sophomores to Admission Possible, and to recognize the commitment that juniors made to ACT preparation and score improvement throughout the year.

This year’s Admission Possible Year-End Graduation Celebration was made possible by the sponsorship of the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities Office of Admissions, Target, and RBC Wealth Management.