

Admission Possible year end graduation celebration

Written by
Thursday, 03 June 2010 13:37



Largest group of students yet complete two-year college prep program

Nearly 1,000 low-income students celebrated this school year's achievements at the ninth annual Admission Possible-Greater Twin Cities Year-End Graduation Celebration May 22 at the University of Minnesota's Northrop Auditorium.

The seniors at the celebration successfully completed a free two-year college prep program through Admission Possible. In the program, they worked with an AmeriCorps coach to cover 320 hours of comprehensive curriculum ranging from ACT practice tests to campus visits, with the final goal of gaining admission to college, securing financial aid and choosing a school that's a good fit.

Of the 667 Twin Cities-area seniors in the program, 96 percent have already been admitted to at least one college for next year. For the many Admission Possible students who will be the first in their families to attend college, this is an accomplishment well worth celebrating.

"This annual event is truly remarkable," said Jim McCorkell, founder and CEO of Admission Possible. "As seniors 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 enter college at less than one-third the rate of their wealthier peers, the energy and excitement among the students in attendance Saturday challenged that statistic.

Students in the Admission Possible program are highly motivated to achieve their goals of gaining admission to college. "The best thing about Admission Possible is studying and practicing for the ACT because it boosted up my skills and ultimately my score," said Mohamed Omar, Minneapolis Roosevelt High School and Admission Possible Class of 2011.

Wes Alcenat, Admission Possible Class of 2006, gave the alumni keynote address. Alcenat lived the first 10 years of his life in Haiti, where he lost both parents to politically motivated

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violence. With the support of Admission Possible, he gained admission to Macalester College and graduated from the institution just a few weeks ago.

“As you go onto college, I challenge you not to lose sight of why you are there in the first place. And as you conduct your studies, I encourage you to have the audacity to apply all that you learn to something that is bigger than yourself,” said Alcenat. “In the smallest words possible, I am challenging you not to shy away from being a leader in the community.”

In addition to celebrating the seniors’ plans, the day featured student skits and other live performances, many of them gestures of appreciation and glimpses of the hopes and concerns seniors have about their college careers ahead.

The Year-End Graduation Celebration 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 the score improvements they achieved throughout the year.

This year’s Admission Possible Year-End Graduation Celebration was made possible by presenting sponsor Travelers, contributing sponsor Best Buy and host sponsor the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities Office of Admissions.