One of the most important lessons Americans learned from the horrific events of September 11 was the responsibility we have to each other. We have been reminded in the starkest possible way of the gravity of those responsibilities and of how much we all depend on those who willingly give of themselves whatever the cost. The heroic efforts of rescue workers and others who responded so selflessly on and after September 11 recall the special qualities that make our country great. The Myself Third scholarship program has been established to honor this altruism and to inspire young people to cultivate and practice the qualities of tolerance, responsibility, and compassion we have all witnessed.

“Myself Third” is a lesson taught by my sixth grade teacher in the Bronx—to put oneself third after responsibilities to God and to country. I congratulate each of the winners of this scholarship. You have demonstrated involvement in your communities and an understanding of the importance not only of academic achievement, but of a commitment to the well being of your fellow Americans. Good luck to each of you as you pursue your studies in the City University, my alma mater. The values you have demonstrated in your high school career will inspire us all in the years to come.

Robert Friedman
ON JANUARY 17, 2002, ROBERT FRIEDMAN - a retired partner at Goldman Sachs (and founding partner at Robeco-Sage Capital Management) and a loyal and generous alumnus of the City University of New York (CUNY)—established a new scholarship for high school students bound for the University. The Myself Third: Spirit of New York Scholarship pays tribute to the altruism of rescue workers following the events of September 11, and serves as an inspiration for young people to model selflessness and civic responsibility in their own communities.

Since the establishment of the Myself Third program in 2002, about 170 students have enrolled in CUNY to pursue their college education supported in their first year by the Myself Third Scholarship. The majority of Myself Third recipients* enrolled in a CUNY baccalaureate program (86.8%) and of those retained, nearly all (95%) had earned their degree within six years. Furthermore, thirty-three Myself Third alumni (~21%) have gone on to enroll in graduate-level programs, most within CUNY (57.6%). This year, the Myself Third program will award ten (10) $4,000 scholarships to College Now students, all of whom will be attending a CUNY college this fall and two (2) $1,000 Alumni Spirit awards to former scholarship recipients in recognition of their leadership, academic achievements, and ongoing community service.

Myself Third gives us the opportunity to invest in talented young people who have shown loyalty and generosity through individual acts of service in their communities. Mr. Friedman’s vision reminds us that our future will require civic responsibility and compassion to sustain the greatness of our city and our country.

It is with great pleasure that we present the winners of the 2016 Myself Third: Spirit of New York Scholarship.

~ CUNY College Now

Myself Third Scholarship
Awards Ceremony

Reception and Refreshments
Featuring the York College Jazz Ensemble
Under the direction of Tom Zlabinger
5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Ceremony
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Jeanette Kim
Deputy Director for Collaborative Programs
The City University of New York

HONORED GUESTS

Jessica Ng
Myself Third Recipient, 2008
College of Staten Island Alumnus

Robert Friedman
Founder
Myself Third: Spirit of New York Scholarship

Eric Hofmann
University Director for Collaborative Programs
The City University of New York

PRESENTATION OF AWARD CERTIFICATES
Eric Hofmann and Robert Friedman
2016 Myself Third: Spirit of New York Scholarship Recipients

Jose Daniel Benitez
Thomas Edison Career and Technical High School

Alicia Michele Defante
Tottenville High School

Rashane Fernando
Harry S. Truman High School

Gloria Hernandez
International Leadership Charter High School

Krutika Sandeep Khartri
Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School

Qian Liu
Williamsburg Preparatory High School

Arsela Sana Mallick
Francis Lewis High School

Jose Fransisco Martinez
Comprehensive Model School Project 327

Xiomara Ermelinda Perdomo
Academy of Finance and Enterprise

Garmen Xie
Midwood High School @ Brooklyn College

Myself Third: Alumni Spirit Award

Nabila Ahmed
The City College of New York

Tasnuva Hoque
The City College of New York
Jose Daniel Benitez
Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical High School
Participated in College Now at Queensborough Community College
Will be attending Baruch College in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
♦ Member, Student Leadership Club
♦ Participant, 2015 Model City Council Project
♦ Member, Student Advisory Council, District Attorney’s Office of Queens
♦ Intern, Graphic Designer / Production Assistant, Williamsburg Community Center

Excerpt from Jose’s Essay
What motivated me to build up my community/fellowship by volunteering is knowing that knowledge in itself is power, that I can give back to my community, and vice versa. Giving back to the community is just as important as gaining knowledge and insight by doing programs and activities. I give back to my community by offering my skills as a graphic designer and production assistant...I helped by making posters, flyers, brochures, and logos to help raise awareness of upcoming events such as [the] family literature program...and by helping to set-up filming equipment to help WCC’s Teen Action Program advocate against gang violence. We must dedicate time to give back to the community by making organizations that help addressing issues and problems we share as one and try to resolve them ourselves or take action to strive for solutions.

About Jose
“Jose is a hard-working and well-rounded individual, with an exceptional charm and kind-hearted persona. Jose is an Edison representative at High School Fairs around NYC, a student guide for parents and prospective students during Edison Open House Events, and a key component of the ACE (Actively Caring Edison) Movement at our school. ACE is an initiative to identify acts of kindness and encourage students to be sympathetic, respectful, and conscious of others through the give of wristbands for thoughtful gestures. He is the perfect example of a well-rounded student. He is artistic, unique in his style, a spirited soul, and optimistic about his future. He will single-handedly renew your spirit and put a smile on your face.”

--Mercy Petroutsus, Social Studies Teacher
Alicia Michele Defante

Tottenville High School
Participated in College Now at Kingsborough Community College
Will be attending the College of Staten Island in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences

♦ Volunteer, Northwell Health Staten Island University Hospital
♦ Member, Key Club
♦ Volunteer, Families Helping Families
♦ Captain, Tottenville High School Swim Team

Excerpt from Alicia’s Essay

To me, living in a democratic society means to be able to vote for the government that you want. Everyone doesn’t have to agree, but the majority of the people’s decision does matter. I want to build a stronger community by contributing my time to activities within the community. All my experiences helping out in my community have made me view society in a good way. The good that people do by working together and helping one another will improve the quality of life in our society. My services and actions in the community help build a culture that opposes the extremism that exists in our society. It shows that different types of people can work together for a common cause. Even though people don’t share the same beliefs, they still work together to achieve something great.

About Alicia

“Alicia is one of the hardest working and caring people that I have ever met. She is so supportive as [the swim] team captain, and went out of her way to help other girls on the team. She would always go above and beyond what was expected of her. She is a great role model for the other girls. As captain of the swim team, she constantly helped the other girls with their swimming stroke techniques. On many occasions after practice she would spend hours of her free time working with the other girls. Alicia is a natural-born leader who has tremendous character. She is the epitome of the Student Scholar Athlete.”

-- Stephen Doyle, Swim Coach
Rashane Fernando

Harry S. Truman High School

Participated in College Now at Bronx Community College, The City College of New York, and LaGuardia Community College

Will be attending The City College of New York in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences

- Volunteer, BuildOn Community Organization
- Teaching Assistant Scholar, PERC Program
- Member, National Honors Society

Excerpt from Rashane’s Essay

In a community, service can create strong connections between people and create a bond that enhances its unity. Service connects communities together and at the same time it empowers an individual—emotionally, socially, environmentally and sometimes physically, thus making us less vulnerable to bad influences such as extremism. Service has brought a new perspective to my present journey and personal growth. Service is about making oneself available to helping others when they most need it and when you do it with love there is so much that blossoms from it. All of this and more are possible because of the freedom and opportunity America has given me. Many take these freedoms for granted, however, I have not.

About Rashane

“Group Discussion Mediator is an important role in my classroom. Rashane frequently volunteers for this role and excels at the position; he masterfully guides the tone of the discussion by holding his classmates accountable for being mature, focused participants in the process. Rashane effectively promotes critical listening, rigorous thinking, building arguments and being respectful of each other’s opinions. In one specific incident, Rashane asked for my permission to address the class’ diminished focus as a whole. He then prepared a well organized presentation to express his disappointment and consequently demanded a renewed commitment from them. The class applauded him afterward in appreciation of his sincerity and conviction. He was successful, for almost immediately the class reestablished an effective learning community.”

-- Reginald Lewis, English Teacher
Gloria Hernandez
International Leadership Charter High School
Participated in College Now at Lehman College
Will be attending Lehman College in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
♦ Volunteer, New York Presbyterian Hospital
♦ Teen Advisory Committee, New York Cares
♦ Living Environment Tutor, International Leadership Charter HS
♦ Member, ILCHS Violin Club

Excerpt from Gloria’s Essay
I wanted to demonstrate that teenagers can do great things and be positive role models. I have always aspired to make a difference in my community, which is why I began tutoring my neighbors since the fifth grade. I knew I needed to reach out to a larger population of students in my community, so I tutored a class of summer students at my previous elementary school during my freshman year of high school. Volunteering has become more than a passion it has given me a long-term goal of working for the United We Dream Organization to advocate for the rights of undocumented students like myself. In America, all immigrants, not just Hispanics, come to the United States to live a life of more opportunities. This is why I am proud to say that my selfless acts have in multiple ways contributed to my community and to my city as well.

About Gloria
“Academically, Gloria is a smart student who has received perfect scores on numerous exams, projects, and quizzes. She exhibits great communication skills and collaborative abilities with those in her class. She is also very passionate about the things she finds value in. Gloria is a self-regulated learner who is highly inquisitive, sharp, and always ready to learn in the classroom context. She takes her education seriously and gives her best efforts in everything she does. Gloria’s success is not limited to academics; she has been involved in numerous volunteering activities as well as community service and internships. Her aspirations exceed far beyond her own ambitions. She has a heart for the betterment of her community.”

-- Joelle Choi, History Teacher
Krutika Sandeep Khatri
Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School
Participated in College Now at Queens College
Will be attending The City College of New York in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
♦ Member, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!)
♦ Tutor, Center for the Integration of New Americans (CIANA)
♦ Member, National Honor Society

Excerpt from Krutika’s Essay

Tragedies that are committed by acts of terrorism show that our world is divided in several ways. Together as communities, we must rise to stand against these terrorizing groups to provide to them that we will not be weakened. Using acts of selflessness, we must rise to fight against the division, hatred, and insecurities that are inflicted by those who try to oppress us. In the United States, I am privileged to go to school without anyone restricting me and I am able to apply and attend a university for higher education in any field that I would like to. As a woman who lives in a free, democratic society, I have the privilege to prove to the world that I can be successful.

About Krutika

“[Krutika’s] energy has enriched our organization immeasurably. Krutika embodies a level of maturity that is rare for a high school student. She holds herself to an exceptionally high standard and is always challenging herself. For example, when I started the Young Women’s Ambassadors program...[she] jumped at the opportunity. She demonstrated courage and resilience throughout the application and interview process. She takes advantage of every opportunity presented to her, and as a result, she already has a wealth of experience to draw upon at a young age. With her enthusiasm and wealth of ideas, any community would be lucky to have her.”

-- Sarah Rashid, College & Leadership Program Coordinator, South Asian Youth Action
Qian Liu
Williamsburg Preparatory High School
Participated in College Now at New York City College of Technology
Will be attending Brooklyn College in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
- Participant, Yleana Leadership Academy, Syracuse University, Summer 2015
- Volunteer and Co-facilitator, Y-Scholars, YMCA
- Member, National Honor Society

Excerpt from Qian’s Essay
The idea of “The American Dream” is not only well known, but has a deep rooted meaning within my family. By having this opportunity in the United States, I’m experiencing “The American Dream” first hand; an opportunity I was afforded because my parents migrated to the United States where opportunities are endless. The support I received throughout the years has influenced me to want to give back and help others. Since I understand how difficult it is for someone to migrate to a new country with a language barrier, I often utilize my ability to help others who are in need. I believe that my services and actions within my community has helped, and will continue to help, open people’s minds about cultural differences and slowly change negative extremist views about people [who] are different.

About Qian
“Qian arrived in the United States in 2009 from a rural village in China., and when she arrived, she did not know any English. Quan has not only preserved to survive in our education system, but she has preserved enough to stand amongst the top 5% of students in her class. She has somehow learned a lifetime’s worth of English in just 6 years. Qian’s experience living in rural China and the obstacles she experience moving to New York City contributes to her strong sense of civic duty by helping her understand the situations of others. Qian’s commitment to leadership, justice, and community is a testament to her perseverance and bravery.”

-- Pooja Bakhai, AP Biology Teacher
Arsela Sana Mallick
Francis Lewis High School
Participated in College Now at Queens College and Queensborough Community College
Will be attending The City College of New York in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences

♦ Member, Key Club
♦ Secretary, Junior State of America Club
♦ Volunteer, Educational Alliance, Sirovich Senior Center

Excerpt from Arsela’s Essay

I have a photo of the First Amendment written in chalk on the ground of Union Square in my phone. To me, this privilege to be able to say what I want and believe in what I want is special to me because the past generations in my family did not have it. Witnessing the rights of the First Amendment written on the floor in chalk in Union Square is just one example of the free expression that I get to experience and participate in society every day. My grandparents were a huge influence in my interest to volunteer for seniors. My volunteer experience has modified the way I perceive society in that it has presented me with a different side of it. It prompted me to learn about social work, different types of people, and the relationship between age groups.

About Arsela

“IT is essential for everyone working or volunteering at our senior center to be a team player and contribute in their own special ways. Arsela’s special contribution is her love and knowledge of food and culture. Hearing that seniors were interested in learning more about different cultures, Arsela took it upon herself to gather all the volunteers and create a cultural exchange night event. The event had a great turnout and the seniors expressed that they really enjoyed it. Arsela does not shy away from what others may see as a challenge, especially managing conflict among seniors and troubleshooting administrative setbacks. Instead, she shows initiative and patience.”

-- Shao Mei Zhang, Health & Wellness Specialist / Teen Volunteer Coordinator Educational Alliance, Sirovich Center
Jose Francisco Martinez

Comprehensive Model School Project 327

Participated in College Now at Lehman College

Will be attending The City College of New York in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences

♦ Member, CMSP Student Government
♦ Tutor, Middle School, CMSP
♦ Secretary, Student Council

Excerpt from Jose's Essay

Giving back to the community has always been something important to me since community has been my light in the dark tunnel of my life. I was motivated to be involved in the volunteering program in my school because of the fact that I was once the student who sought help from people to complete homework and understand math and reading. I felt that volunteering offered a great opportunity to implement values that were essential for me as a young student to succeed and to become the hard working student I am today. I was able to learn that in our society, we need to help people realize that education is the way we can change the world and that sometimes the work of the teachers goes underappreciated. The strength that comes to a community through service shows that when we take some time from our day to give back to our communities, we are literally building better futures.

About Jose

“Jose is an academically strong student who is self-motivated to learn more and better himself. Jose has engaged in several Advanced Placement courses, and is currently successfully taking a college level class at Lehman College. Jose has always been and remains at the top of his graduating class. On top of being academically sound, Jose is also one of the most generous, compassionate, and giving students we have. Jose has truly impacted the school as a whole by gathering everybody together and creating a true sense of community and family. In addition to these roles, Jose also has mentored and tutored younger students in the building.

Given our unique 6-12 facility, it is essential that we build a sense of community where our older students help instill the culture of the school into our younger classes. Jose is a role model for the students younger than him, and this is another example of exemplar leadership.”

-- Alixandre Ricci, Principal, CMSP 327
Xiomara Ermelinda Perdomo
Academy of Finance and Enterprise
Participated in College Now at Baruch College and LaGuardia Community College
Will be attending The City College of New York in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
♦ Member, Pathfinder’s Club
♦ Ambassador, Junior Achievement
♦ Secretary, Student Government

Excerpt from Xiomara’s Essay

To me, democracy is a door. A door leading to many opportunities. My motto has always been “create the life you want”. This would not be possible if democracy did not provide freedom. Democracy means accepting everyone for who they are and granting them the power to create change. For this reason, I decided to volunteer in my school and in my community. In addition, volunteering makes a difference in the lives of others. Volunteering has made me realize that everywhere you go someone is in need of something. Unfortunately, we live in a world where there are people full of hate and violence. Doing volunteer work shows others that there is hope. It demonstrates that there are people that are not only selfless, but willing to do anything to help others.

About Xiomara

“This young woman is about competence, can do, and consistency. I have never known her to back off a challenge, academically, nor have I ever seen her slow down or avoid responsibilities. Her academic abilities are strong but rather than being presumptuous she is modest and unassuming. Xiomara considers that working for the community really makes a difference and she has made a concerted effort at making her community service requirement a meaningful experience. In talking about her decision to volunteer with seniors she shared that she wanted to provide company to people that otherwise had no one to talk to. Needless to say she has been a positive role model for her fellow students and for other volunteers.”

-- Delia Leon, College Advisor
Garmen Xie
Midwood High School @ Brooklyn College
Participated in College Now at Brooklyn College
Will be attending Brooklyn College in the fall

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
♦ Counselor and Volunteer, Brooklyn Chinese American Association
♦ Volunteer, Chinese American Planning Council
♦ Student and Tutor, New York Chinese School

Excerpt from Garmen’s Essay

My parents have always taught me that I should cherish my well-being and to let my good qualities be present in other people. Selflessness and commitment to helping others will leave you feeling more happy and useful because no one who was selfish was ever happy. My experience has also taught me that reaching out for help is not a bad thing. My innate love for teaching and my parents have helped pave the way for me in helping the less fortunate and building my community. Volunteering has glued my heart to becoming a teacher, and opened a path for the Chinese community to become involved in their free society.

About Garmen

“Garmen is an exceptional student and model for other students. During the time that she spent in my classroom, she was one of my most motivated and dedicated students, with a sharp mind and a strong sense of duty. ...she never shied away from taking charge or asking hard questions. In fact, her articulate answers and keen insight commended immense respect from all of her peers. Her deep insight into the variety of topics was impressive as well. Never the one to settle, Garmen always dug deeper into relevant issues. She was never afraid to speak her mind and always felt genuine in her passion. This was reflected in her work which showed a depth of maturity that is well beyond her years.”

-- Kamil Kraszewski, English Teacher
Nabila Ahmed
Freshman, The City College of New York
Myself Third: Alumni Spirit of New York Scholarship Award

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
- Member, CCNY Women in Islam
- Volunteer, Coler-Goldwater Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility
- Member, In School Youth Program - The Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee (ISY-HANAC)

Excerpt from Nabila’s Essay

People from college think much differently than high school students. In order for me to become a successful student, I had to move out of my comfort zone and collaborate with strangers. The result helped me to become a versatile group member, know how to perform well in a team. Talking to my fellow classmates helped me develop an open mind… I would advise newly enrolled students to not be afraid to ask questions and definitely go visit professors during their office hours. This will help establish a better professional relationship with their instructor, and develop better communication skills that can take one forward in life. Volunteering personally made me a stronger person as it has taught me to be patient, and put my best foot forward. These experiences has strengthened my leadership abilities and has brought a sense of greater insight to the community around me.

About Nabila

“Nabila is excelling academically at CCNY and is a standout among her peers. She was very wise and took many College Now courses prior to starting at CCNY. Nabila plans to major in science and her career goal is to become a physician’s assistant. She is a first-generation college student, and the science and math curriculum at CCNY is known to be very rigorous. These factors make Nabila’s academic accomplishments so far especially impressive. Whereas many students struggle to adapt to the demands of college and just try to keep up with their academic work, Nabila seems to thrive at CCNY. It is clear to me that Nabila has great leadership potential, and is eager to get involved and help others off-campus as well. I am confident she has the skills and mindset necessary to achieve the goals she has set for herself.”

-- Sherri L. Rings, Ph.D.
Counselor and Associate Professor, CCNY
Tasnuva Hoque
Freshman, The City College of New York
Myself Third: Alumni Spirit of New York Scholarship Award

Work, Volunteer and Extracurricular Experiences
♦ Tutor, Urban Scholars Preparatory Program, CCNY
♦ Intern, PENCIL Partnership Program
♦ Member, Bengali Students Association, CCNY

Excerpt from Tasnuva’s Essay

My first semester at CCNY’s Grove School of Engineering has been very challenging and exciting at the same time. The transition from high school to college was the biggest challenge, overcoming which was a big part of learning. Challenging classes and a demanding college environment inspired me to transform both as an academically and personally mature individual. I got a phone for the first time in college. This piece of information might sound very simple and trivial to anyone, but to me this “phone” happened to be one of the most significant. My phone became my biggest source of distraction. I have a college counselor with whom I discussed all these difficulties...and [she helped] me manage my ‘time and phone’ smartly. I learned that failure is a part of life but bouncing back is the aim in life.

About Tasnuva

“Throughout the period of volunteering, Ms. Hoque interacted positively with both staff and students. She has qualities that made her a great addition to our organization. She is always diligent in handling all given tutoring assignments with imagination, style and professional spirit needed to make students comfortable, confident, and eager to learn. Her ability to articulately facilitate the interest of students, who are from varied ethnic background, in cultivating good study habits, not only for getting better grades, but also for learning and expanding the horizon of knowledge, is definitely incredible. She has and continues to make a positive impact on the students, their families and the Urban Scholars program as a whole.”

-- Katina Beazer, Program Coordinator
Urban Scholars Preparatory Program, CCNY
About College Now

College Now is a nationally recognized “enhanced dual enrollment program,” and provides multiple pathways to college-readiness for NYC public high school students by connecting dozens of high schools with a CUNY college campus to offer supported college experiences. Each year, more than 21,000 students participate in College Now representing over 400 NYC high schools.

The primary goal of College Now is to improve the academic preparation of NYC public high school students by ensuring that they are ready to do college-level work upon graduation. In addition, College Now aims to serve students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education and provide pathways for all participants to build skills proficiency and develop a strong college-going identity. Qualified students have the opportunity to take college-credit courses, preparatory courses, and workshops; participate in experiential-based summer programs; and access campus facilities while in high school.

College Now Program Staff

**Baruch College**
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Clemente Diaz

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