

Honoree Story Template

A gentle structure for telling the story of the person your scholarship honors — who they were, and what they changed in you.

Why the story matters

The story is what makes a scholarship feel like a thank-you instead of a transaction. It tells applicants what the award stands for, it tells your community why you did this, and it keeps a person's name in use. Aim for 200–400 words — one page, read aloud in two minutes.

Five-part structure

1. **The moment.** One specific scene. A hallway, a classroom, a shop floor, a kitchen table. What was said or done?
2. **The person.** Their name, their role, where and when. Two or three details only someone who knew them would know.
3. **The change.** What was different in you afterward — a decision, a habit, a door that opened.
4. **The through-line.** The quality you want this scholarship to carry forward.
5. **The passing on.** Why foster youth, and why now.

Prompts to get you writing

- What did they say that you still repeat to yourself?
- What did they do that they probably thought was small?
- What did they see in you before you saw it?
- What did their classroom, shop, office, or kitchen look and sound like?
- What would they say if they knew a scholarship carried their name?
- If a student receiving this award met them, what would they notice first?

Worked example

Sample — honoree story

The [Honoree Name] Scholarship

[Mr. Honoree] taught [subject] at [school] for [number] years. [He/She/They] kept [a specific object] on [his/her/their] desk and [a specific habit].

In [year], I was [describe your situation in one plain sentence — no self-pity, no detail you would not want read aloud]. [Honoree] [did the one specific thing]. [He/She/They] never mentioned it again.

That [conversation / afternoon / job] is the reason I [outcome]. I do not know who I would be otherwise.

[Honoree] believed that [the quality — e.g. every young person deserves one adult who assumes they will succeed]. This scholarship carries that belief to young people who have often had the fewest such adults: current and former foster youth. Each year it goes to a student who is going somewhere, and who could use one person to say so out loud.

— [Your name], [relationship to honoree], [year]

If your honoree has died

- Consider telling their family before you announce. Most are deeply moved; a few prefer privacy.
- Ask the family for one detail or photograph to include.
- Use present tense for the quality and past tense for the person: “She believed — and that belief still does work.”
- “In memory of” is appropriate; “in honor of” suits a living honoree.

Permissions and accuracy

- Get written permission before using a living honoree's full name or photograph.
- Verify dates, job titles, school names, and spellings — especially of names.
- Do not describe another person's private circumstances, including a student's, without their permission.
- Keep your own story simple. You are introducing the honoree, not writing a memoir.

Where to use the story

- On your application page, so applicants know what the award stands for
- In your announcement to schools and caseworkers
- In the notification letter to your recipient
- In your submission to Thank a Teacher, so we can share it with your listing

Important

This template is a general educational resource, not legal, tax, or financial advice. Thank a Teacher does not collect, hold, or distribute scholarship money, does not receive applications, and does not select recipients. The sponsor is solely responsible for funding, administering, receiving applications, selecting recipients, paying awards, and meeting all legal, tax, and compliance obligations. Please consult qualified professionals about your own situation. To be featured on thankateacher.com, a scholarship must be exclusively for current or former foster youth.