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LOCAL NONPROFIT SPONSORS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR DISABLED YOUTH

Beltsville, Md. (March 7, 2017) – [Project ASCEND](http://www.project-ascend.org), a college scholarship program and youth civic engagement nonprofit, announces its sponsorship of the *2017 Project ASCEND Scholars Program*. This scholarship initiative will provide five \$1,000 college scholarships to disabled students living in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Students can apply by downloading the application on <http://www.project-ascend.org> and submitting required materials by June 15th. The program will accept applications from students with a physical or mental disability attending community college or a university in the 2017-2018 academic year. Recipients will also participate in a lobby day sponsored by Project ASCEND to support further investments in higher education for students with disabilities.

Project ASCEND Founder and Director, Ola Ojewumi, is a recipient of the [2017 AAPD Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award](#), which has provided funding for the *2017 Project ASCEND Scholars Program*. The AAPD Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award, bestowed by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), recognizes outstanding emerging leaders with disabilities who exemplify leadership, advocacy, and dedication to the broader cross-disability community. Every year, two individuals receive \$2,500 in recognition of their outstanding contributions and \$7,500 to further a new or existing initiative that increases the political and economic power of people with disabilities.

“This initiative will to empower disabled students and give them the opportunity to address how our public education system is leaving countless disabled students behind,” said Ola Ojewumi, 26, Project ASCEND Founder and Director. “The hope is that these scholarships will provide more than just financial assistance to disabled college students but to introduce them to political leaders working in the disability rights movement so they too can influence change for students like them.”

Diagnosed with mitochondrial disease and the recipient of both a heart and kidney transplant, Ola’s advocacy through Project ASCEND is reflective of her dedication to advancing the lives of young people with disabilities. To learn more about Project ASCEND, visit www.project-ascend.org.

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Project ASCEND is a college scholarship program and youth civic engagement nonprofit organization. Founded in 2011, its mission is to create higher education opportunities for youth living in Washington, D.C. Accomplishments to date include public service partnerships that provide college scholarships, the creation of a teen camp reaching 100 low-income girls, collecting 200 books for women’s education programs in Africa, and mentoring more than 500 youth.