

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Alpha One Disability + Aging Solutions offers two scholarship opportunities to support Maine students with a disability who wish to pursue post-secondary (after high school) education or training. Scholarship awards are \$5000 per scholarship winner and will be paid directly to the post-secondary school or training institute where the scholarship winner has successfully completed one-semester of higher education or training.

Alpha One will accept applications on a rolling basis until April 1.

Scholarships Offered Choose one or apply for both!

Powering Education Scholarship [\$5,000]

This scholarship is awarded to a Maine student with a disability who wishes to pursue further education or training after secondary school (high school).

Derek O'Brien Memorial Scholarship [\$5,000]

This scholarship honors the memory of beloved Alpha One board member, Derek Hance O'Brien, and will be awarded to a Maine student with a significant physical disability who demonstrates the noble spirit, kind heart, and amazing resilience that Derek exemplified every day.

Eligibility

To be considered for either scholarship you must:

- Be a current student or past graduate at a high school within the state of Maine.
- Have a B average or equivalent GPA.
- Have received an acceptance letter from a post-secondary institution.
- Have a disability. For the purposes of this scholarship, disability is defined as a physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, mental health, or chronic health condition that substantially impacts one or more major life activities.
- Applicants for the Derek O'Brien Memorial Scholarship must have a physical disability that substantially impacts mobility or daily living and reflects the spirit of resilience and independence that Derek embodied (please refer to "Derek's Story" on the next page).

Please note, scholarship recipients need not be high school seniors, but may be anyone pursuing higher education, regardless of high school graduation date.

How to Apply

Submit the following items by email to mardi@alphaonenow.org, fax to 207-799-8346, or mail to P.O. Box 1870, Portland, ME 04104.

- Completed application form.** Fill out the entire application form at the end of this page. You can type the information or print clearly.
- Essay.** A 500 to 1000 word personal essay stating how your disability has helped shape your view of the world and you as a person. If you are applying for the Derek O'Brien Memorial Scholarship, please read Derek's Story (attached) and tell us why you think Derek would be rooting for you. If you are a past Alpha One scholarship recipient, please provide an update for the scholarship committee.
- Letter of recommendation.** Include a letter of recommendation from a teacher, guidance administrator, coach, clergy, etc.
- High school or most recent academic transcript.** Include an unofficial copy of your current academic transcript.
- Media Release Consent Form.** Please sign and date our release form and select your level of consent.

Payment of Awards

Awards will be made upon the successful completion of the first semester of post-secondary school. To qualify as a successful semester, the student must maintain at least a 2.5 on the 4.0 scale. In order to receive payment for the first semester, transcripts must be received by Alpha One. Checks will be made out to the post-secondary school. Alpha One reserves the right to review the conditions and procedures of this program and to make changes at any time, including termination.

Alternate application formats available on request.



Derek's Story

The Derek O'Brien Memorial Scholarship honors the life, resilience, and indomitable spirit of Derek Hance O'Brien whose determination, humor, and fierce independence changed the way people understood disability, community, and possibility.

Derek's life took a dramatic turn in 2005, when a diving accident left him with a traumatic brain injury and quadriplegia. What followed were years of unimaginable medical challenges and relearning how to do nearly everything – from speaking to navigating daily life. To say Derek had a will to live is an understatement. He met every obstacle with focus, grit, and an unwavering belief that his life still held purpose.

That belief shaped everything Derek did. He returned to school, earning a degree in new media from the University of Maine, and went on to live independently in Portland. A champion of disability rights, Derek served on local boards and committees, including Alpha One Disability + Aging Solutions, mentored newly injured individuals through EmpowerSCI, and worked tirelessly to make his community more accessible. He embraced technology as a tool for independence and artistic expression, most famously his iBot wheelchair which could balance on two wheels and traverse tough terrain. Often balancing upright with a red Superman cape flowing behind him, Derek reminded everyone he met that disability did not mean limitation.

Derek never met a stranger. He was generous with advice, quick with humor, and deeply committed to helping others navigate life with a disability. Through advocacy, mentorship, photography, and community engagement, he showed how to find beauty, connection, and meaning, even when life required extraordinary resilience.

This \$5,000 post-secondary scholarship is awarded to a Maine student with a disability who demonstrates resilience, determination, and a commitment to building a meaningful life and contributing to their community. This scholarship supports a student Derek would be rooting for -- someone who keeps showing up, pushes forward with courage and humor, and believes in what's possible.

Through this scholarship, Derek's legacy lives on by uplifting others and carrying forward his unmistakable Superman spirit.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Personal Information

Full Name: Date of Birth:

Address:

Email: Phone:

Disability:

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Name

School Information

Current School: Graduation Date:

Extra Curricular Activities/Groups:

Honors/Awards:

Volunteer Opportunities:

College/University you plan to attend:

Program/Major:

How did you hear about us?

Please indicate the scholarship(s) for which you would like to be considered (review descriptions on informational page).

- Powering Education Scholarship Derek O'Brien Memorial Scholarship Both Scholarships

All of the above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

MEDIA RELEASE CONSENT

I hereby grant Alpha One Disability + Aging Solutions permission to use my (or my child's) name, likeness, image, voice, and/or written or spoken statements in photographs, video recordings, and other media.

I understand that these materials may be used in print, digital, and online formats, including but not limited to:

- Alpha One's social media channels
- Alpha One's website
- News releases, press coverage, and other media outlets
- Promotional and educational materials

I acknowledge that:

- I will not receive financial compensation for the use of these materials.
- Alpha One will own the rights to all media created.
- Permission is granted in perpetuity unless revoked in writing.

CONSENT

I give permission to Alpha One Disability + Aging Solutions to use my (or my child's) photo, video, and/or information as described above.

I do not give permission.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Address _____

Phone _____ **Date** _____

For participants under 18, parent/guardian signature is required.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____