



Getting to College: Moving from Frustration to Achievement

by Faith Frank, President of the AXA Foundation

In a recent survey,¹ when parents were asked what word best described how they felt about saving for their children's college education, the number one response was "overwhelmed." "Frustrated" wasn't far behind. Half of families feel that they're behind on progress in saving for college or should have already started saving.² Only a third of families have a plan for paying for college and, on average, families will save only half of what they had expected to save.¹ Add in the fact that tuition is rising at about twice the rate of inflation,³ and the challenge for families who want to send their children to college is clear.

AXA Achievementsm helps make college possible by providing **access**, in the form of \$1.4 million a year in scholarships, and **advice**, as a comprehensive resource for information to help students and parents plan for college. Why the two-pronged approach? Because, while parents named expenses as the biggest obstacle to pursuing a college degree, navigating the financial aid process came in at number two.⁴ AXA Achievementsm offers tools to help families plan, save and pay for college.

AXA Achievementsm is funded by the AXA Foundation, the philanthropic arm of AXA US. Increasing educational opportunities through AXA Achievementsm is a natural fit for a company whose purpose is to help provide financial security. A college graduate can expect to earn 64% more than someone with only a high school degree.⁵ Helping a young person pursue a college education is a great way of starting them on the road to a more secure future.

Since AXA Achievementsm launched in 2003, we've awarded \$25 million to more than 6,000 students across the country, making AXA one of the nation's largest corporate providers of scholarships.

A college graduate can expect to earn 64% more than someone with only a high school degree.

Only a third of families have a plan for paying for college.

Who wins an AXA Achievementsm scholarship?

Our scholarship recipients, known as AXA Achievers, have all accomplished something exceptional outside the classroom. Here are just a few examples of what this year's remarkable winners have done:

- Created the "Global Soap Project," which repurposes soap from hotels in the U.S. and Canada to send to vulnerable populations around the world, such as those in refugee camps and orphanages. Nearly 60,000 new bars of soap have been created for donation.
- Developed GreenShields, a device that helps boost gas mileage of school buses. The invention, which was started in the student's own garage, is set to be installed by a major school bus company.
- Designed a software program that automates the diagnosis of bladder cancer by quickly and inexpensively identifying cancerous cells.
- Became the first blind runner to compete in high school cross-country racing with the help of a guide dog. Nationally recognized for raising awareness of Stargardt's Disease, the form of macular degeneration that caused the student's blindness.

Visit us at www.axa.com/achievers, where you can read more about our AXA Achievers, watch their inspiring videos, and learn how your family can plan and prepare for your children's college education.

Adapted from an article that appeared in the September 2013 issue of *Our Children* magazine, published by the PTA.



College Planning We Can Help

Because AXA understands how challenging the road to college can be, we created **AXA Achievementsm**, which helps make college possible by providing:

Access: More than \$1.4 million a year in scholarships.

Advice: A comprehensive resource for information to help students and parents plan for college.

Access

Through AXA Achievementsm, **AXA is one of the nation's largest corporate providers of scholarships.** Our scholarships include:

AXA Achievementsm Scholarship in association with U.S. News & World Report:

- \$1.4 million awarded
- Scholarships in the amount of \$2,500, \$10,000 and \$25,000
- A winner in every state, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and in every local community where AXA has a presence

Advice

Whether your child is about to enter college, or college is many years off, **making the right decisions now is crucial.**

Visit us online, where the Paying for Education section provides resources such as:

- Tools and calculators
- Comparisons of various funding strategies
- Analysis of 529 plans
- Federal financial aid options

You'll also find a wide range of seminars — available free of charge — on planning for college and other financial issues facing families. If you or a group are interested in a seminar, let us know at

axa.achievement@axa.us.com.

Learn more at www.axa.com/achievers

AXA Achievementsm is funded by the AXA Foundation, the philanthropic arm of AXA in the U.S.

¹ *How America Saves for College 2013*, Sallie Mae/IPSOS

² *2012 Household Financial Planning Survey*, Consumer Federation of America

³ *Tuition Inflation*, FinAid.org, accessed October 2013

⁴ *Innovation in Higher Education Survey*, Northeastern University/FTI Consulting, 2012

⁵ *The Economic Case for Higher Education*, U.S. Department of the Treasury/U.S. Department of Education, 2012

AXA Achievementsm is a service mark of the AXA Foundation. The "AXA Achievementsm Scholarship" program is not associated with the National Merit Scholarship Corporation's "Achievement Scholarship[®]" program.

"AXA" is the brand name of AXA Equitable Financial Services, LLC and its family of companies, including AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company and AXA Advisors, LLC.