

Heather McNamara Memorial Scholarship

Many people may remember Heather McNamara as a 7-year-old featured in a commercial for New York-Presbyterian Hospital in 2011. In the commercial, she explained how removing and then replacing many of her organs was the only way doctors could remove a baseball-sized tumor. The rare 23-hour procedure was even the subject of an episode of "The Good Doctor."

In real life, world-renowned surgeon Dr. Tomoaki Kato removed six of Heather's major organs to cut out a cancerous tumor lodged deep in her body and put everything back together. It was a surgery other doctors said could not be done. She was the first child to ever undergo the procedure, and it was a success.

Despite being so sick most of her life, Heather was a fighter. She was a graduate of East Islip High School, and she threw herself into volunteer work and service projects.

In a nod to the doctors and nurses who helped her, Heather was an EMT and planned on becoming a paramedic.

Her family is asking others to honor Heather by doing an act of kindness in honor of a young lady who made the most out of every second she was alive.

Those applying for the Heather McNamara Memorial Scholarship must meet the following criteria:

- be a graduating senior of East Islip High School
- must be accepted as a full-time student at a college, university, or trade school.
- must submit a brief essay of 500 words or less explaining how cancer has affected you and how you have grown because of it. Also describe your contribution and service to your community.