

Heather's Helpers Foundation 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's Helpers Foundation 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, sickness, or illness has affected your life. What have you learned from it and how have you grown because of it.
- Describe your commitment, contribution and service to your community.