

I have been a mentor to Sierra since she was 13, originally from a program at our church.

Sierra's background could easily have led her into a life of bad choices. **The details that were supplied at this point in the nomination were personal with regards to Sierra's early life. Therefore, these comments will not be released; however, please know that the scholarship committee found them to be very extraordinary requiring great perseverance...** So, the grandmother raised them, as a single parent (her husband was shot and killed some time earlier), including Sierra's younger brother who is autistic and requires special education. [A year ago Sierra's brother was returned to the custody of their mother.]

From an early age, Sierra has learned to be flexible and to deal with poverty and negativity. Grandma works in a factory on a limited income, but has always involved the children in church programs, camp in the summer, youth missions, etc. Sierra is very nurturing, as she has helped to raise her younger brother all these years, and lately, her grandmother has counted on Sierra to be the leader in their small family, now just the two of them.

In March of 2010, they were awakened by firemen banging on the door of their rented house. They lost everything but clothing in the fire, due to faulty wiring, leaving them temporarily homeless. Sierra was in the middle of show choir competitions and spring theatrical performances at school, but she handled it all with a level of maturity seldom seen in most 18 year girls. Church friends donated furniture and they were able to find an apartment to move into within weeks.

Sierra has managed to achieve mostly A's and some B's at school (her GPA is 3.5 or so), been very active in drama and choirs, as well as actively participate in the youth group at church. She even managed to become a featured dancer in the show choir, though she's had no formal training. She is a voracious reader and also a very good writer (I've encouraged her to keep a journal for the past few years).

I believe that Sierra is a shining example of overcoming hardship, forging forward despite difficulties, and becoming the best person you can be no matter what. She has clearly risen above her circumstances. I suspect that few people at her school know of her background; she tries hard to be just like everyone else, but it shows in her maturity and it shows in her resolve.

Sierra has decided to pursue Youth Ministry and will attend Anderson University, partly to be closer to her grandmother. There is no family money for her to attend college, of course, so she knows she must find grants and scholarships to afford it.

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It is an honor to recommend Sierra Holland for the ExtraordnAIRy Treasure Scholarship. My name is Mandy Baldwin and I am the Jr. High Director at The Church at The Crossing on the north side of Indianapolis. I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Sierra for over 6 years.

I believe Sierra would be an excellent candidate for the ExtraordnAIRy Treasure Scholarship. Sierra is very active in the youth program at the Church at the Crossing. She is a part of our Worship Team that helps lead worship at our student led service on Saturday nights. She is also a part of our Youth Missions Institute which is for students who desire to do

more and make a bigger difference in people's lives. They meet and talk about diversity, missions, social justice and then they go out and put into practice what they are learning. They have served downtown at Wheeler Mission, a homeless shelter and they are traveling to an Indian Reservation this summer to minister to people there.

Over the years Sierra has participated in our summer missions/work camps. Some of the trips have included building projects (homes and churches); vacation Bible School teaching in Mexico; ministry to the homeless in Atlanta (passing out food and clothes and other necessities.) and working with Henderson Settlement in Frakes, KY. On every trip Sierra has stood out because of her work ethic as well as her leadership capabilities. She takes direction very well and is willing to help out wherever needed.

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"Survivor" is the word that I would use to describe Sierra Holland. **The details that were supplied at this point in the nomination were personal with regards to Sierra's early life.**

However, she has done well in school, become active in school events, been very active in church events and has been accepted to several prestigious colleges. She has done all of that with grace, keeping her head held high.

I have never once heard her complain about her circumstances. I have known a lot of students in my thirty-six years as a public school educator, but she stands out as a survivor with character.

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Sierra is an amazing girl. She hasn't had the easiest upbringing, but doesn't use that as an excuse or reason for anything. She's very committed to our student ministry at church and is a leader to other students. she is as deserving as anyone i could imagine for a scholarship like this.

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I'm so excited to hear that Sierra is in the final pool! As i said before, she is so deserving.

Sierra's character is top notch. A lot of that has to do with her family situation and how she's had to grow up so quickly and take on so much responsibility. As a leader in our ministry, she shows great wisdom and character with her daily choices and decisions that she makes.

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Sierra is here for just about everything we have the doors open for. the only times she misses is when she has previous commitments with the school programs i mentioned. she has a high commitment and loyalty to us and her friends and family.

Sierra has dealt with and overcome a lot in her life. She's a committed and loyal friend who is there for anyone at any point that they need her. She's been a great example of what it means to be an upperclassmen leader in a ministry or any other group. She's caring, loving and a model for younger students to strive for.

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I have known Sierra for over 6 years... Her life has not been easy and yet Sierra has a peace and joy that goes beyond her circumstances. The foundation of this, I believe, is her relationship with God. She is becoming an extremely mature and

self-aware young woman who is not afraid to step outside her comfort zone. She is very involved in Choir and musicals and comedy sports at School. She is also one of our strongest leaders in the student ministries at the church. I have walked along side her and her family through some pretty serious life circumstances and Sierra has risen above them and been the most mature member of the family. I am excited because she will be the first member of her immediate family to attend college. She will succeed because she is an extremely hard worker.

Sierra is also open about her life and looks for opportunities to speak into others lives. She consistently acts as an encouragement to others and her life is an inspiration to many. She is comfortable being up in front and sharing from her heart.

Mandy Baldwin | Jr. High Director  
Church at the Crossing

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I am the theatre teacher at Lawrence Central High School. I have had Sierra Holland all four years of her high school career. She is a dedicated performing arts student who has fought tooth and nail to stay in school. She has a magnificent attendance record. She has devoted her after school life to theatre and music. She worked hard to become a member of the International Thespian Society and is an officer this year. She is a two year member of our top theatre group, THE LC PLAYERS. She is a two year member of our Comedysportz High School League team. She has been in as many plays and musicals as we have had here at LC. She has never been a lead, but has been happy to be a supporting or minor role. She is a team player and a devoted student. She is one of those kids that you would love to have an entire class room of.

Even though she has had many hardships in her life, she does not make that a crutch. She keeps quiet about her personal life and has goals and dreams that she would love to have.

I think she is the perfect candidate for your scholarship. She would make you very proud as she makes me every day despite what she has been up against her entire life. Please make this a success story.

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I have had the pleasure of being Sierra's Psychology and Sociology teacher this year. Sierra is very mature for her age and has a genuine thirst for knowledge. Sierra has an excellent work ethic and always participates in class. I know Sierra has had struggles in her life, and it amazes me that she is so self-directed and a very pleasant young lady. Instead of looking at life in a cynical negative way she has done the exact opposite by approaching all she does in the most positive way. Sierra is a young lady of great integrity and is an excellent role model for her fellow classmates.

As a teacher it is so nice to have a student like Sierra who gives you a smile and positive attitude everyday. I have been teaching for 25 years and Sierra Holland definitely fit the mold of the ideal student.

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