

Most Improved Student
Reno South Rotary Club

Program Summary: The Most Improved Student Program is unique in its recognition of students who have overcome obstacles to position themselves for college or education in various professional trades.

Focus of the program:

Students who have overcome drugs, gangs, fighting, poor attendance, family conflicts, broken families and severe medical challenges are selected. All selected students receive scholarships, a hosted luncheon for themselves and family or their mentors.

How is the program best implemented: Two students from each of the nineteen Washoe County High Schools are chosen for overall improvement in not just grades, but social skill, community service and especially how they have overcome hardships in their personal and family lives. The two students, male and female, that are picked from each high school attend a two-hour seminar in business and motivation. Then the students and their families are treated to lunch at the Rotary meeting.

Each student is then asked to give a five-minute presentation on how he or she has overcome the major obstacles in their lives. Reno South Rotary members judge and the top five are given additional \$1,000 scholarships.

Results of the program: The students awarded the scholarships use the funds to further their educational and career goals. "Some of the past winners have made their way past hurdles like physical abuse, addiction, illness or severe poverty to achieve their dream of a high school diploma." said Alison Conner, the club's past president. "Our scholarship program recognizes their efforts and, hopefully, provides encouragement for future successes."