

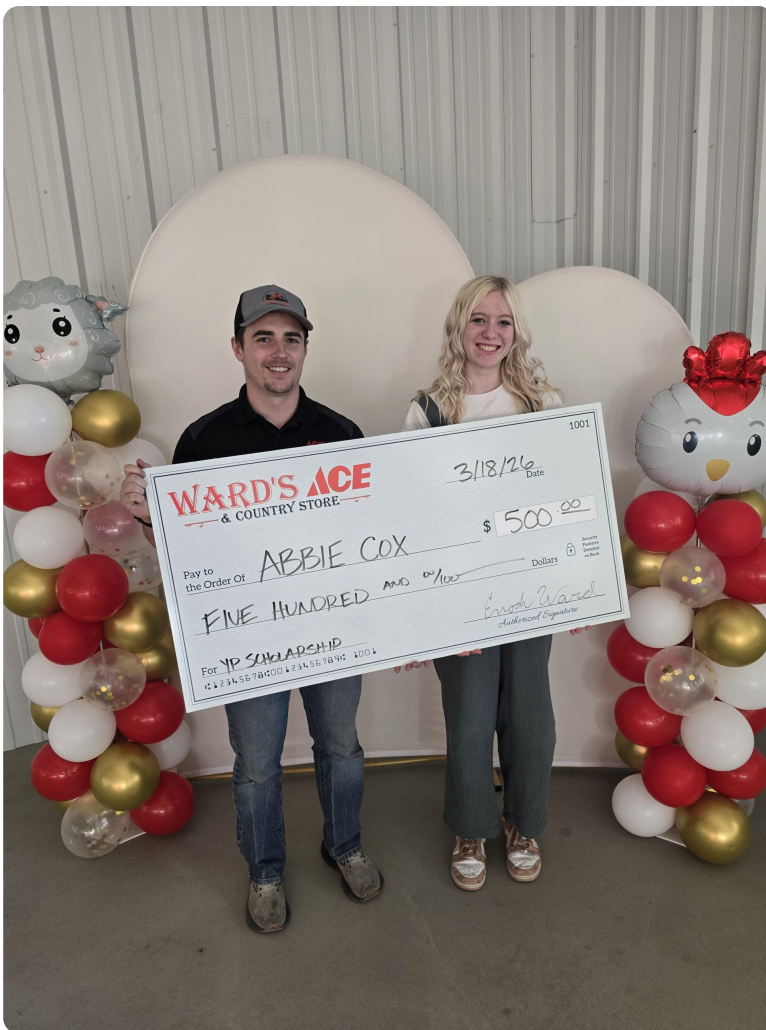


Young Producer Scholarship

2026 Scholarship Recipient

Abigail Cox

Lamb • 11th Grade • 9 Years Experience



Essay: Why I Should Receive the 2026 Ward's ACE Young Producer Scholarship

Would you believe me if I told you that showing lambs has taught me to stand up for myself? At a young age, I was introduced to market lambs and have loved every second of it—well, to be honest, almost every second. I don't quite value the times being dragged through the dirt or pushed to the ground compared to the feeling I got when receiving my first Quality Ribbon.

To rewind a bit, when I was in Middle School, I had a friend group that I thought shared similar values to mine. But because we didn't, I got bullied for being myself. I struggled and hated being alone. I always felt like I was roaming the hallways trying to avoid the group that always saw the worst in me. When summer came, I got a lamb that was feisty and pushed me to my limits. At first it was hard to go and work with my lamb. I knew that I would end up on the ground or he would jump up on me, adding to my collection of scratches from him. That lamb taught me a valuable lesson. As Maya Angelo once said, "If you don't like something, change it, if you can't change it, change your attitude".

I didn't like being shoved to the ground, so I started to change it! I started teaching that lamb who was in charge. I stopped letting him control me. Yes, he still pushed me down at times, but I was stronger now to get back up and fight. As a Middle Schooler this was just what I needed to learn the importance of standing up for myself. I couldn't expect someone else to do it for me. Now, as a teenager, when I go to pick out my lamb, I look for the

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feistiest one in the bunch and that's who I buy.

As someone who has always loved animals and spends their summer working with them, showing lambs has become a part of my life

that I value. Though we work for an entire summer for a few minutes in the show ring, I've also learned to enjoy the little things like having the sheep smell stick with you all summer long- if you know, you know. I love having to haul buckets of water to the back of my yard for my lambs and having it occasionally spill all over me because I filled it too full and have more than I thought I could carry. I love that I get to spend time with my sister. This project allows me to train an animal on my own and build a relationship without words. Animals never judge you, and I go to them for relief! It's not every relationship you come across that's like that. I have shown in 4-H for years, and this will be my third year showing through FFA. I love being able to up the competition and see things through a different perspective. I would love to thrive in Showmanship and place near or at the top of my class this year. Each year, I learn new things and tips that I try to implement the next year. Because I've been doing it for a while now, I truly hope that one day I will receive a Grand Champion Ribbon. I'm not saying that it has to be this year, but I am saying that I will be trying my hardest! Additionally, I hope to raise an animal that does well in market class too! I've watched my family members succeed in this project, I've learned from my friends and leaders, and I want to continue being able to say that I walked out of the show ring giving it 100%!

This scholarship will help me in so many ways financially! If you haven't noticed, things lately have gotten really pricey! As someone who is on track to get their Associates Degree in High School, I spend a lot of my time focusing on college classes during the school year and not as much time at work. Time during the summer is focused on my projects from horses, to my dog, goats, or lambs. I am almost constantly working with an animal. This scholarship opportunity would truly help my savings stay higher than it would without it! As someone who will be graduating in a couple of years, I'm about to be thrown into a world with prices higher than reality for a 16-year-old girl.

Overall, I've learned so much from working with and showing my lambs throughout the years. From valuable life lessons like standing up for myself, to random parts of showing that make my day like loving the smell of a dirty lamb. This project has shaped who I am regardless of this scholarship or not. I hope I succeed this year and place high in my showmanship and market classes. The young producer scholarship would help so much financially. Thank you to those who have contributed!