



Nicolas "Nico" Cardenas
Judson University
ACI General Scholarship

Nicolas "Nico" Cardenas knew he wanted to attend a Christian university. Practicing their faith is important to him and his family, so they looked at several Christian-affiliated colleges before deciding on nearby [Judson University](#). "What I really liked about Judson University was that it is a small university," Cardenas says. "The community there is very uplifting." Knowing and interacting with professors while studying for a degree was also an important plus, he says.



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Cardenas, the youngest of two siblings from Streamwood, Illinois, is now a junior majoring in psychology and piano performance, with hopes of going into social work. "There are a lot of opportunities at Judson, such as working with the RISE Program or

other places nearby that love to have Judson University students," he says. "I'm currently thinking about interning at the Boys and Girls Club in Elgin. That's kind of where I want to go, into social work or DCFS."

Cardenas' interest in psychology comes from his parents, who have done counseling through their church. "I really wanted to make an impact in my community. I've been working with the youth ministry of my church and the children's ministry of my church. I want to help kids have a different perspective on their problems. I just want to make a difference, honestly." In addition, Cardenas is a self-taught pianist and plays at his church. At Judson, he plays in a piano ensemble is learning how to read music. "I've been loving it ever since. They're developing this artistic sense in me, and it's been a really cool experience," Cardenas says. He gets to share his musical talents with the university's worship team, and his band plays regularly at Judson's chapel services.

Cardenas and his father learned about the ACI General Scholarship through the financial aid office at Judson. "It's just been absolute blessing to have," he says. "It's really cool to have extra support from someone who honestly doesn't know me, but yet they still believe in me."

Cardenas explained that he helps support himself through a part-time job as a pizza-delivery driver, and his parents' help. "That's why the scholarship has been an absolute blessing for my family. It's just an extra support, and it takes an extra weight off their shoulders, and I'm very grateful to see that. Just random people wanting to support me and also supporting my family as well. A complete blessing," he says.

To donors who support students such as him, Cardenas says their help inspires him. "Your donations, your support for me, gives me the desire to want to help people in the future ... to do the same thing that you're doing because you're heroes to us."