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EDITORIAL

Working Twice as Hard

In 2000, just two weeks after her fifth-grade graduation, Karla Mejia woke up with numbness on the right side of her body. The diagnosis was multiple sclerosis. She spent almost a year in the hospital, relearning to walk and to write, but her anger and depression over the years left her unable to concentrate on schoolwork.

She repeated classes, and eventually dropped out of high school. In 2008, [Medicaid](#) terminated her coverage after she missed a paperwork deadline. Without coverage, she would have had to go without weekly injections to control the disease. “I was lost,” she said.

She sought help at New Heights Neighborhood Center, which referred her to the Workforce Advocacy and Support Initiative, a program run by the [Community Service Society](#), an agency in The Times’s [Neediest Cases Fund](#), which helped her regain Medicaid benefits. She has also received \$135 for MetroCards from the fund, allowing her to travel to the Medicaid office and the doctor. Last August, Ms. Mejia passed the G.E.D. exam with high scores. Her next step is to study physical therapy at LaGuardia Community College. “I push myself more,” she said. “I have to work twice as hard so I can shine.”

Donations to the Neediest Cases Fund go to seven charities: Brooklyn Community Services; Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York; Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens; the Children’s Aid Society; the Community Service Society of New York; the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies; and UJA-Federation of New York.

To help, please send a check to: The New York Times Neediest Cases Fund, 4 Chase Metrotech Center, 7th Floor East, Lockbox 5193, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11245. You may also call (800) 381-0075 and use a credit card, or you may donate at: www.nytneediestcases.com.