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By AnnArbor.com Staff

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER: Braylon Edwards follows through on \$1 million promise to Cleveland high school graduates

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Braylon Edwards made good on a promise he made to a group of Cleveland eighth graders in 2007, awarding them \$1 million worth of college scholarships.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer reports that the former Michigan wide receiver hosted the Braylon Edwards Foundation's Advance 100 Graduation at Cuyahoga Community College's Metro Campus Wednesday night.

One hundred students received \$10,000 scholarships for holding up their end of the bargain: Completing 15 hours of community service each year and maintaining a 2.5 GPA through graduation.



Michael Gundich, 18, one of the Braylon Edwards Foundation's scholarship recipients, hugs Edwards after the Advance 100 Graduation Wednesday night.

Joshua Gunter | Cleveland Plain Dealer

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Edwards wasn't exactly beloved by Cleveland fans during his years (2005-09) with the Browns, which included dropped passes on the field and some trouble off of it. He was traded to the New York Jets in 2009 and will be a free agent when the NFL lockout is lifted.

He joked about his popularity -- and made a veiled **LeBron James** reference -- in a [series of posts on his Twitter account](#) before the event:

"As the 2nd most hated man in Clev. & a man of my word, Today I will honor a promise made to 100 students in Cleveland 6 years ago. The last of my Advance 100 students will graduate from my program & head off to college on scholarships that I will provide them with. Guys enjoy & embrace your new beginnings and remember your promise to me, to reach back & help someone else along the way!!!"

More details on the scholarships [from the Cleveland Plain Dealer](#):

Edwards told the students, whom he has followed since the eighth grade, not to be what the media calls a "lost generation."

"You have to succeed," Edwards said during ceremony. "Prove them wrong. Don't be a lost era, be a powerful era."

Edwards was traded to the Jets in October 2009, but felt it was important to fulfill the promise that he made in 2007 to Cleveland area students through his Advance 100 Program.

"Whatever I choose to start I choose to finish," Edwards said during an interview. "We started it here. It didn't matter that I got traded. I committed to the kids in 2007 and here we are in 2011 and I'm still committed."

Students who were interested in the program had to apply in eighth grade. Cleveland school officials helped to narrow the group of 1,100 applicants down to 175.

Malesa Prater, Edward's mother and head of the Edwards Foundation in Detroit, picked the final 100 students.

Edwards held a charity basketball game in Ann Arbor on April 15, with proceeds going to Lou Gehrig's Disease research at the Taubman Institute of Michigan.

One week later, he was in New Jersey to lead the Ronald McDonald House's statewide fundraising walk. He had already sold his condo in the area in anticipation of being a free agent.

"I'm not (in New Jersey) at all, I'm waiting to see what happens with the lockout and everything, but we're still up here, trying to help these kids," Edwards told the Newark Star-Ledger. "This is really about our commitment to what we start. We started a relationship with them, and just because (my time with the Jets is) on the fritz or I may not be here, we're still committed to our relationship."

All of Edwards' goodwill has been mixed with some scrapes with the law.

He has a pre-trial hearing for a driving while intoxicated case scheduled for July 22 in Manhattan. He was arrested on Sept. 21 for two misdemeanor counts of operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated and one of operating a motor vehicle while impaired, [according to the Star-Ledger](#).

Depending on the outcome of that case, Edwards could face additional discipline from the NFL or the Cleveland Municipal Court. At the time of his arrest, he was on inactive probation in Cleveland stemming from [a 2009 incident outside a nightclub](#).

Tags: Braylon Edwards, Wolverines.

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