Benny Foster was a dedicated student from the start of his education at Anderson County Schools in rural east Tennessee. He was eager to learn and had excellent support at home. But he struggled with reading.

“I guess I was your typical 6- and 7-year-old boy,” Benny remembers. “I loved playing football, and that was about the time my grandparents got me interested in antiques. I spent most of my weekends playing football, then going to my grandparents to go to estate sales and the flea market. I have always enjoyed school and learning. My mom says she never had trouble with me doing my homework; I always came straight home and did it. My biggest struggle I guess was my reading.”

Anderson County Schools has served more than 4,000 Reading Recovery students since implementing the intervention in 1995. Kris Leach was the first teacher leader and was trained that year by Sue Duncan and Clifford Johnson at Georgia State University (who are both still at Georgia State). When Kris retired in June 2006, a scholarship was established in her honor to recognize former Reading Recovery students who have overcome, in some instances, many obstacles to pursue their dreams. And this year, Benny is the recipient of that scholarship — presented annually to a graduating senior who is pursuing postsecondary education and who has demonstrated financial need.

An all-state academic football scholar and member of the Elite 100 in high school, Benny is attending the University of Tennessee and majoring in civil engineering. He completed Middle College and received his Associate degree even before graduating from high school with a 3.7 GPA. He scored a 32 on his ACT in reading.
“It has been my privilege to have been his Reading Recovery teacher,” said Robin Lindsay. “With support at home and from his first-grade teacher, Benny easily discontinued his Reading Recovery lessons. His eagerness to learn is evident in the successes he has had throughout his educational milestones. I look forward to watching him continue to achieve new goals and be successful as he continues with higher education.”

And Benny is thankful for the opportunity.

“I owe a big thanks to Ms. Lindsay and my teachers at Briceville Elementary,” Benny said. “Without their help, I don’t know where I would be now. I am so grateful that they took the time and cared about me enough to teach me and encourage me to be my best. Who would have guessed that I would be attending the University of Tennessee for my civil engineering degree?”

We are so proud to give Benny Foster our Reading Recovery Scholarship as we celebrate our 22nd year of helping struggling learners. He is a true testament to how Reading Recovery can not only teach students to read, but can sustain that success over time.

*top right: Robin Lindsay has followed Benny’s progress from Reading Recovery through high school.*

*right: Benny is all smiles with mom and dad, Angie and Benny, at graduation ceremonies.*