When Roberto Madan came to the United States as a 35-year-old Cuban refugee, he found a factory job that paid $50 a week. But when his manager looked over Madan’s application and saw that he was a college graduate, he upped the offer to $75 a week without even being asked. From that moment, Madan always understood the value of a college education.

Now 90 years old and a retired schoolteacher and McDonald’s owner/operator, Madan has spent the last 28 years involved with the Ronald McDonald House Charities. And on June 16, as the organization celebrated its annual Hispanic American Commitment to Educational Resources (HACER) Awards Luncheon at Yankee Stadium, it also recognized Madan, who is stepping down as chairman of the scholarship selection committee. Despite receiving citations from New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, as well as a personalized Yankees jersey recognizing his 28 years of service, Madan refused to accept all of the credit for the organization’s good works.

“Congratulations to everyone for the wonderful things we have done with this program,” Madan said. “We have done it together.”

The attention paid to Madan took nothing away from the afternoon’s main focus — bestowing college scholarships on 17 deserving local Hispanic high school seniors. With four-year awards ranging from $16,000 to $40,000, RMHC/HACER gave $300,000 this year, bringing its total since 1987 to almost $8 million in scholarships.

The top 2015 award went to Tracy Villalpando of Ozone Park, New York, who will attend New York University in the fall, where she plans to major in elementary education. Accepting the award, she invoked a famous Nelson Mandela quote, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

“This award just shows how Hispanics and Latinos have prospered in the world and become better people,” Villalpando said before the ceremony. Her interest in education comes from a desire to help all children, whatever their backgrounds. “You might teach the next president!”

While the RMHC/HACER awards will help the students begin their college careers, Madan says that seeing students enter college isn’t the organization’s goal. That’s just the start.

“We are not interested in putting the students into college; we are interested that they finish college,” Madan said, adding that more than 90 percent of the students who have received the scholarships over the years have graduated. “That’s the difference between our program and the other programs. We wait for them at the end. It’s incredible.”

Follow the Yankees en español at yankeesbeisbol.com, at www.facebook.com/yankeesbeisbol and on Twitter at @Yankees_Beisbol.