OAR Announces 2023 Scholarship Recipients

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 11, 2023
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ARLINGTON, VA – The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is pleased to announce the 2023 recipients of the Lisa Higgins Hussman Scholarships, Schwallie Family Scholarships, and the Synchrony Scholarships for Autistic Students of Color. This year, these three scholarships attracted 1,112 applicants, and the awards total $165,000. Through this program, OAR has provided 558 scholarships, maintaining its commitment to furthering the education of remarkable and determined autistic students since 2007. With these additional scholarships, OAR has awarded a total financial contribution of more than $1,717,500 since the program began.

Each of the scholarships provides a one-time $3,000 award to students with autism diagnoses pursuing post-secondary education at a variety of institutions. This year, OAR is awarding 19 Schwallie Family Scholarships to students attending four-year and two-year colleges; 20 Lisa Higgins Hussman Scholarships to students attending two-year colleges, life skills or postsecondary programs, or vocational, technical, or trade schools; and 16 Synchrony scholarships to students of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds attending any form of post-secondary education. The recipients of these highly competitive scholarship awards are individuals who have demonstrated their ability to overcome personal challenges in pursuit of their ambitions.

“The Hussman scholarship winners are all hard-working students and very deserving of their scholarships,” says Lisa Hussman, president of the Lisa Higgins Hussman Foundation. “I look forward to hearing about their accomplishments in the coming year.”

Cathy Schwallie, chair of the Schwallie Family Scholarships, stated: “Another stellar year of applicants. Happy to see a decent percentage of female scholarship winners this year, more than ever before! These students have had tough journeys and are true “go-getters” planning around their personal passions and getting accepted into top schools and programs. The Schwallie Family is honored to continue to support these worthy neuro-distinct scholarship student winners.”
Denise Yap, President of the Synchrony Foundation, stated: “Autistic students of color continue to be underdiagnosed and under-resourced. Synchrony and its employee resource group, the People with Disabilities Network, are proud to support the Organization for Autism Research, helping these exceptional students pursue their academic goals and shining a light on this well-deserving community.”

Congratulations to this year’s scholarship recipients!

**Lisa Higgins Hussman Scholarship**
- **Lily Burrows**, Clemson University (Clemson Life) – Clemson, SC
- **Alex Corson**, USC Aiken Pacer Life – Aiken, SC
- **Hunter Gunn**, Coastal Carolina University – Conway, SC
- **Holdyn Hensley**, University of Oklahoma – Norman, OK
- **Micah Highfill**, Northeastern State University – Tahlequah, OK
- **Sophia Huette**, Illinois Central College – East Peoria, IL
- **Matthew Lange**, University of Oklahoma Sooner Works Program – Norman, OK
- **Nick Lapinski**, The Ohio State University TOPS Program – Columbus, OH
- **Curtis Loftus**, Utah Valley University – Orem, UT
- **Blake Marburger**, Alvin Community College – Alvin, TX
- **Maddox Meulemans**, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater – Whitewater, WI
- **Emily Polizzi**, Frank Phillips College – Borger, TX
- **Anna Olivia Roberts**, University of North Carolina – Greensboro, NC
- **Lydia Ross**, Tennessee Rehabilitation Center – Smyrna, TN
- **Spencer Sibley**, George Mason University – Fairfax, VA
- **Noah Summers**, Marian University – Indianapolis, IN
- **Robert Velasco**, Winthrop University – Rock Hill, SC
- **Braden Verhagen**, Transitions – Mayfield, NY
- **Jake Waggoner**, Utah State University – Logan, UT
- **Cole Williams**, Cuyahoga Community College – Cleveland, OH

**Schwallie Family Scholarship**
- **Solana Anderson**, Tarleton State University – Stephenville, TX
- **John Apigian**, College of William & Mary – Williamsburg, VA
- **Melissa Bak**, The Ohio State University – Columbus, OH
- **Keeley Behr**, University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire – Eau Claire, WI
- **Carson Berge**, University of West Florida – Pensacola, FL
- **Rudraaksh Karthick Bhuvaneswari**, University at Buffalo – Amherst, NY
- **Torri Blue**, Grand Valley State University – Allendale, MI
- **Tylor Brents**, The Savannah College of Art and Design – Atlanta, GA
OAR congratulates each of the 55 recipients and extends its gratitude once again to the Lisa Higgins Hussman Foundation, the Schwallie Family Foundation, and the Synchrony Foundation. These scholarships would not be possible without their generous support.

OAR’s annual scholarship awards help autistic students pursue their educational goals. The next open application period will begin in December 2023. More information, including the link to the application portal once it opens, can be found on OAR’s Scholarship Page.

About OAR: The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national non-profit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. OAR is
dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and autistic individuals find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. Learn more at their Web site: www.researchautism.org.

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