



## More Than \$40,000 in Awards and Bursaries Distributed by The Angel Foundation for Learning

The Angel Foundation for Learning has awarded more than \$40,000 in awards and bursaries to graduating students, and elementary schools this year.

New this year was the introduction of a bursary for Indigenous Youth. **Jacob Bisson and Janice Sanderson-Wilson** are the first recipients of the \$5,000 bursary, which will be presented at the National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration scheduled for 11 a.m. on June 21, 2022 at the Catholic Education Centre, 80 Sheppard Avenue East.

Four students will receive the Tom Leon Student Bursary, valued at \$5,000 each: **Shana Abraham, Ava Chau, Chloe Cusi and Quincy Okafor** at the year end Mass to be held June 23, 2022 starting at 10 a.m. at the same location.

“We are immensely grateful for the partnership of the Equity, Diversity and Indigenous Education Department for co-funding the new bursary for Indigenous students,” says AFL Executive Director John Yan. “We extend our congratulations to the two recipients of this new award, and wish them well in their future studies.”

“This year, we not only granted an unprecedented number of bursaries and awards, but also received a record number of deserving applicants, which made final selections extremely difficult for our review panels,” says Mr. Yan. “We take great pride in knowing that through our Bursary and Award program continues to support the post-secondary aspirations of at least some students across the City of Toronto. We thank Connie Leon and the Leon Family, as well as other donors who continue to support these bursaries for students who are facing financial challenges. We could not do all that we do without their assistance.”

### Other Award and Bursary winners included:

- **Bacchelli Family Bursary** – Naomi Ibama
- **Exceptional Student Bursary** – Khayouri Johnson
- **Mary Jane McKeen Bursary** – Joy Ogbonna
- **Murdocca Family Literacy Bursary** – Leon Li
- **TANDIA Bursary** – Jayla Houston
- **AFL Music Bursary** – Joshua Manrique
- **AFL Visual Arts Bursary** – Erica Barrientos  
Amy Yan Zhou
- **Spirit of Inclusion Award** – Jahliyan Price  
Nanterre Evangelista

## More About Our Bursary Winners

**Jacob Bisson** is a 17 year-old two-spirit Anishinaabe person from Scarborough, who is graduating from St. John Henry Newman CSS. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Humber College. In addition to his studies, Jacob worked with an Indigenous school in Scarborough last summer as a Teachers' Assistant, helping engage the students in summer learning. He also worked as a summer camp counselor with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, where he helped with field trips, Indigenous rituals like smudging, prayer, or a sweat lodge, and setting up activities like picnics, canoeing and crafts. He also participated in the Youth in Policing Initiative at the Toronto Police Service.

**Janice Sanderson-Wilson** is a non-status Metis completing her studies at St. Joseph Morrow Park CSS. She has been accepted at Seneca College in the Fashion Arts program starting in September 2022. To enhance her skills she has been part of the University of Ryerson Beading Circle for two years. She completed 12 prom dresses for graduation for some of her classmates and is using the funds towards her education. She is a 2020 silver medalist in the butterfly stroke, served as president of the student council for two years, president of the computer club, anime club, choir member, equestrian riding member as well as teaching other students to ride, a member of the robotics club and STEM club. She is also a member of the Canadian Opera Chorus and has participated in the Canada 150 production of Louis Riel. She is also a member of the Metis Youth Counsel.

**Shana Abraham** has her sights set on the Schulich School of Business at York University. Graduating from Father Henry Carr CSS, her family arrived from the Middle East in 2012. Maintaining a 90% grade average, Shana also worked with the Toronto Police as part of the Youth in Policing Initiative where she had the opportunity to participate in town halls regarding community safety and gang prevention. She graduated the program as valedictorian, and in the summer of 2020, she worked as a camp counsellor at Adventure Valley Day Camp. She engaged in various commitments with over 400 community service hours with Elevation Church, initiatives such as Night to Shine, a prom experience for individuals with special needs, volunteering at Youth Without Shelter and at Etobicoke General Hospital in the giftshop and as part of the Pandemic Response Team.

**Ava Chau** has accepted a placement at the University of Guelph where she is pursuing an Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Biology. Graduating from Mary Ward, she was the Finance Officer of the Mary Ward DECA chapter and continually worked to help inspire interest in financial literacy among her peers. She was instrumental in helping to bolster the membership to five times its original size. She is a volunteer teacher at St. Ignatius Chinese School, the place where she once learned more about her own culture and language, as well as at her local community centre supervising children in recreational activities, and at Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church where she served as an usher. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, she participated in Ripples of Kindness, where members of the church community prepared and distributed meals for others in need.

**Chloe Cusi** is graduating from St. Joseph's Morrow Park, and is pursuing an Honours BA in Psychology at York University. In addition to her studies, she is an active member of both her school and parish community, participating in several clubs including the Student Council, Blaze Dance Crew, Senior Band and Rock Band. She served as Deputy Premier on the school's Executive Student Council, helping to organize school-wide events. In the Blaze Dance Crew, she helps to choreograph and teach the other members the dance routines. In her parish she has served with the Youth Group since 2016 where she advocates for human rights and works as a Junior CORE Member. She has supported events such as the parish's annual Good Friday service, tree planting and working with Street Patrol to reach out to those suffering from homelessness.

**Chiamaka Quincy Okafor** is a community leader, active church member, and outstanding student/athlete of St. Basil-the-Great CSS. She has played a variety of sports including soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and ultimate frisbee. On the honour roll since 2018, she has maintained an above 90% grade average for every academic year. Her passion for mental health and the human mind has led her to pursue Psychology at Waterloo, University of Toronto, York, and McMaster University. Upon completion, she plans to pursue a psychiatry degree in medical school. As a community leader, she is devoted to providing mental health supports for black students who are misrepresented and advocate for those who go unheard. She joined the St. Basil Student Council as an equity rep, sports rep and also served on the Black History Committee.

**Naomi Ibama** is graduating from St. Mother Teresa CHS this year. Through all the challenges of migrating to a new country with a big family, she has devoted herself to working hard to fulfill her dreams of becoming a Nurse Anesthetist. Her parents are on a fixed income, and with Naomi being the third child to pursue a university education, she recognizes the importance of trying to find ways to ease the financial burden of tuition fees.

**Khayouri Johnson** was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, OCD, social anxiety and an auditory processing disorder, which made his early years challenging both academically and socially. Throughout his

high school years at Michael Power-St Joseph CSS, he has not let his exceptionalities deter him from experiencing everything that the school had to offer. He participated in orchestra, annual music shows, liturgical choir, mathematics and science contests, and the Amnesty International Club. Of all the activities, he most enjoys the school's Drumline, and progressed to centre snare by grade 10. Outside of school hours, he has tutored students from grades 3 to 10 at his local library and has volunteered three hours a week as an assistant dance instructor at his local community centre. He is pursuing studies in Chemical and Physical Sciences at the University of Toronto.

**Joy Ogbanna** is pursuing studies in biomedical mechanical engineering at the University of Ottawa after graduating from James Cardinal McGuigan CSS. Her work aims to promote inclusivity and equity, starting with serving as vice president of the student council, where she ensured that each student is given the opportunity to be involved in school and community events. She helped lead Black History Month and International Women's Day celebrations, transitioning those events to a virtual platform when schools were closed due to the pandemic. As a Nigerian immigrant, she put a great deal of effort into improving her language skills and has received awards in several subjects including Maths and Geography and participated in the prestigious Waterloo Cayley contest. She also volunteers as a Maths Tutor at her school and has accumulated approximately 100 community service hours.

**Leon Li** is graduating from Brebeuf College School, and plans to attend Seneca College where he will study Creative Arts, Animation and Design. Identified with the exceptionality of deaf and hard of hearing, he has overcome numerous challenges throughout his life, and now hopes to pursue a post-diploma program in animation at Sheridan College. Having lost his father unexpectedly, Leon helps as much as he can at home, and is determined to ease the financial burden on his mother. During his years at Brebeuf he was involved with a variety of varsity sports, as well as the school band. He enjoys playing sports, coaching soccer, playing piano, working in both indoor and outdoor environments and has an affinity for computers, particularly for animation, character design and creative programs like Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and Clip Studio Paint.

**Jayla Houston** is a student at Father Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School, pursuing a post-secondary career in Aviation Technology at Seneca College. Throughout high school she maintained a grade average of 88% plus and has been an active member making notable contributions to both her school and neighboring community. Her Instagram account is dedicated to creating awareness about beauty standards in society, as well as providing a platform for followers to express themselves in a safe and caring environment. As an active member of the Carr community, she helped organize and promote various events throughout the academic year and sat on several committees focusing on supporting charities. She also volunteered as a helper at the school's boys' basketball games by scorekeeping and assisting with other tasks, and was a member of the basketball, volleyball, and soccer teams. She was also involved in the after-schools' Girl's Club, which provided a safe environment to discuss struggles and develop new skills and strategies, and the Warm Fuzzies Program, which posted words of kindness on student lockers.

**Joshua Manrique** refers to himself as an unfinished multi-movement concerto. Graduating from Senator O'Connor College School, he is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Music at the University of Toronto. He started piano at the age of 4, and is currently working towards the RCM Level 10 Piano Exam. He is also an incredible saxophone player, and started up a "bootleg concert band", called The Mad Hatters, which began with entry into the CBC Music Class Challenge, by playing their own version of Shania Twain's "Up!". They made it into the Top 10 of all of Canada. He is a regular high scorer in Waterloo's mathematics contests, always making the top 25% every year, is a skilled public speaker earning the Valedictorian Award and the Most Improved Award in the Christopher Leadership Course. An active volunteer in his parish, he has volunteered for Kingdom Camp (a two-week summer kids camp), Early Catholic Family Life Ministry (a weekly Saturday session to help out families with young children provide the right foundation for faith), and Confirmation Preparation.

**Erica Barrientos** is a grade 12 student at Mary Ward CSS and will be pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Design, with a focus in fashion at Toronto Metropolitan University. She was an executive yearbook member since 2020 where she was responsible for designing pages for the yearbooks and collecting feedback from the teachers and students on what to include, and how to improve the publications. She also participated in Our Kids Our Future where students discussed and spread awareness about global social justice issues as well as planning initiatives within their own communities. She seized the opportunity to create posters and signs around the school to highlight key issues. She is also dedicated to academics and has consistently been an honour roll student throughout her high school years.

**Amy Yan Zhou** will be off to the School of Art Institute of Chicago after graduating from St. Joseph's College School. Saying she has a unique art style, her creativity allows her to express emotions in a variety of mediums: painting, digital drawing, sculpture, photography, collage and even music and writing. She wants to tell others that it is totally fine to experience bad times, however, she encourages everyone to face the challenges with kindness and courage. She is currently working on a mural painting in

her school's art classroom called "head in the clouds". Her hope is that the mural will help others discover who they are, and inspire them when they feel a little lost.

### **Elementary School Awards**

In addition to the student bursaries, The Angel Foundation for Learning also presented schools with awards to enhance literacy programs and materials, and purchase resources for school libraries. Receiving \$500 each this year are **Holy Rosary, St. Joseph and St. Robert Catholic Schools.**

**Spirit of Inclusion Awards:** To help with the cost of hearing aids and batteries, AFL has provided some funds to two students: **Jahliyah Price and Nanterre Evangelista.**

To learn more about the awards and bursaries supported by The Angel Foundation for Learning, see: <https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/bursaries-awards/>