



PRESS RELEASE

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Pride Foundation Awards More than Half a Million Dollars in Scholarships to 130 LGBTQ and Ally Student Leaders

SEATTLE, WA– Today, Pride Foundation announced scholarships to 130 students from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington totaling \$535,000—the largest total award in the organization’s history.

Pride Foundation is one of the largest sources of scholarships to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) and ally students in the country. These scholarships seed the next generation of leaders and support remarkable students who are engaged in a range of studies that will benefit the LGBTQ movement and the world.

Students supported include:

Ethan Lauesen, a returning scholar from Klawock, AK, attends the University of Alaska Fairbanks and wants to inspire LGBTQ youth to embrace the arts as a way to create visibility for topics related to gender identity.

Anna McClain-Sims of Boise, ID currently attends Yale University in pursuit of an undergraduate degree in Molecular Biology. She hopes to inspire young women and members of the LGBTQ community to pursue careers in STEM.

Sherman Red Tomahawk is a returning scholar from Browning, Montana and the Blackfeet Reservation. Sherman is studying elementary education at Blackfeet Community College where he is a part of the 2 + 2 Program through University of Montana Western. Sherman hopes that becoming an LGBTQ educator will open doors for others.

Kai Velazco of Gresham, OR is enrolled at Mount Hood Community College to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. They will focus their efforts on preventative care and education that is often not accessible to marginalized people.

Amber Letchworth from Clarkston, WA is studying at Eastern Washington University to become a social worker who will help her clients navigate the systemic barriers of everyday life.

“Investing in the educational dreams of our community is both an act of hope and love,” said Pride Foundation CEO, Kris Hermanns. “These leaders are critical to the progress of our

community and will continue to inspire the change that is transforming movements and our lives. We are thrilled to be able to support them on this journey.”

Since its inception in 1993, Pride Foundation’s scholarship program has awarded more than \$5 million to over 1,300 individual scholars, all of whom identify as LGBTQ or allies. All Pride Foundation scholars either currently live or grew up in the Northwest, and come from diverse backgrounds and identities—this year, 67% are students of color, and 38% identify as transgender or gender diverse.

These scholarships have proven to be critical for students like Kai Velazco, “Education isn’t available to everyone. I recognize the privilege it has been to receive one and I am grateful for my communities’ support in mine. I aspire to pay it forward not only through the volunteer work and activism I am doing during my academic career, but through my work as a future health care provider.”

The press and members of the public can meet these inspiring students at local events taking place around the region. Learn about one in your area at [this link](#).

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Founded in 1985, Pride Foundation is a regional community foundation serving Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Its mission is to inspire giving to expand opportunities and advance equity for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) people in the Northwest. Learn more at www.pridefoundation.org.