National AIDS Memorial Grove Announces Recipients of Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship

$50,000 in scholarships awarded to ten young leaders committed to fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, through grants provided by Gilead Sciences and Wells Fargo

SAN FRANCISCO (February 4, 2019) – The National AIDS Memorial, through its Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship, has awarded ten outstanding undergraduate students a total of $50,000 in financial scholarships to further pursue their educational goals and commitment to active roles of public service in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Named in honor of AIDS educator, activist and reality television pioneer Pedro Zamora, who passed away 25 years-ago from an AIDS-related illness, the scholarship has helped support the education of young people who are engaged in a variety of HIV-related work in their schools, communities and chosen academic fields.

“We are pleased to see the continued growth of the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship and how our support is helping shape the next generation of leaders who are actively engaged in AIDS-related work,” said John Cunningham, executive director of the National AIDS Memorial. “These students are pillars in their communities and their campus, each with their own stories and a passion for making an impact.”

Each scholarship recipient is receiving $5,000 to support their educational goals. Through the application process, the recipients also demonstrated leadership in their efforts to raise greater public awareness about prevention, public policy, treatment and support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

"I feel honored to be one of the recipients of the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship," said Emily Nold. "This scholarship is giving me the opportunity to continue my studies, I am incredibly thankful for the National AIDS Memorial and their unfathomable love for youth activism and dedication to supporting the next generation of leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS."

The ten scholarships recipients, honored on World AIDS Day, represent communities from nine states and include:

**Tranisha Arzah, a freshman at Seattle Central College in Seattle, Washington,** is pursuing an Associates of Arts degree within the Community Health and Education track with an emphasis on Equity and Social Justice. Her plans are to continue advocating on behalf of women and youth to implement policies that support comprehensive sexual health models in southern Seattle. For more than five years Tranisha has worked as a peer advocate for BABES-network, a peer-led supportive program within the YWCA in Seattle.

**Kota Babcock, a freshman at Colorado State University in Denver, Colorado,** is pursuing a degree in journalism to help work to preserve the history and legacy of those who fought and lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. Kota is an intern at Denver’s “All the TEA” (Teach.Empower.Advocate), where he works to change the stereotypes associated with HIV/AIDS. Kota has also worked as a youth ambassador for National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, and advocates to Colorado elected officials on the need to improve preventative care to people at-risk or living with HIV.

**Mona Bandom, a freshman at UC Berkeley in Berkeley, California,** where she plans to become a global health professional. Her goal is to work establishing accessible and free health clinics and to provide doctoral assistance to marginalized communities in South East Asia. Mona found her calling during her internship at Until There’s a Cure Foundation, which works to fight HIV and AIDS by raising funds for awareness, vaccine development, education and direct services.
Justin Bell, a junior at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia, is studying political science and finance. He worked in Liberia as a volunteer with the United Methodist Church Mission Global Health Team, seeing firsthand the impact of HIV/AIDS in the local community, the lack of education and the misinformation about treatment and cure. Upon his return to Atlanta, he has volunteered on campus to promote health safety for students. He wants to pursue a career in public service to advocate for those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Asamia Diaby, a junior at CUNY Lehman in Bronx, New York, is a housing advocate dedicated to protecting the rights of HIV individuals. She believes that ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic does not rest solely on the shoulders of sex educators, but that housing reform, income equality, safe injection facilities and health care for all are also critical. Through her work with H.O.M.E. (Housing Over Monitoring and Eviction) and VOCAL-NY she works toward social justice for all.

Grace Gautereaux, a junior at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, is a second-year recipient of the Pedro Zamora Scholarship Program. Grace wants to use her education to turn the tide on abstinence-only education and promote a sex education curriculum that will encourage youth of all sexualities and genders to use condoms and engage in safe sex. In addition to her work with NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, she is active in multiple on campus clubs dedicated to sexual health and justice.

Karlo Manzo-Arroyo, a freshman at the University of Illinois in Chicago, works in the Department of Public Health as a certified rapid HIV tester and counselor. Every day he helps connect interested individuals with HIV services throughout Chicago including screening and treatment for STIs, housing, employment, food, legal services, medical care and much more. He is pursuing a degree in accounting to work within his agency’s finance department and ensure continued funding for HIV programs.

Emily Nold, from Fox Island, Washington, is a freshman at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, plans to study non-profit administration and management. At her high school in Washington State, Emily helped lead the school’s AIDS Peer Education Exchange (APEX) Club, a student-led club dedicated to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as the Pierce County AIDS Foundation (PCAF). Working with PCAF she helped organize World AIDS Day observance events, distributed condoms and coordinate fundraisers for the organization.

Verenice Ortiz-Robles, a freshman at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque, New Mexico, lost her father to HIV/AIDS. In honor she joined the International AIDS Society to help those impacted the HIV/AIDS and works to help translate material and presentations on safe sex.

Nicolas Rios, a freshman at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., plans to study public health policy. While finishing high school in Tucson, Nicolas worked with the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation serving in their Youth Empowerment LGBTQ Leadership Coalition, Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and Youth Advisory Council. He also founded his school’s first Gender and Sexuality Alliance to educate and normalize discussions around sex and sexuality.

The National AIDS Memorial started the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship Program in 2009 and has since expanded its reach to high school seniors and college students from across the country. The scholarships are supported through the generosity of corporate and individual donors, including major support this year from Gilead Sciences and Wells Fargo. To date $250,000 in scholarships have been awarded to nearly 70 students.

“The grants provided by Gilead Sciences and Wells Fargo are supporting the education of these truly amazing students who are making a difference in their communities and on campus,” said John Cunningham, executive director of the National AIDS Memorial. “Without their financial support and generosity, this scholarship wouldn’t have the tremendous impact that it does, not just for these students, but also in helping to support and develop today’s young leaders as they work to end HIV/AIDS.”

The Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship is open to current high school seniors, and college freshman, sophomores and juniors who demonstrate an active commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS and taking on roles of public service and leadership. The application open period begins March 1, 2019. To learn more about the scholarship and the National AIDS Memorial, visit www.aidsmemorial.org or call (415) 765-0497.

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