For Immediate Release

National AIDS Memorial Awards $50,000 in Scholarships to Young Leaders
Committed to Helping End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

The Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship surpasses $300,000 in educational support through grants provided by Gilead Sciences and Wells Fargo

SAN FRANCISCO (October 24, 2019) – The Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship, a program of the National AIDS Memorial, has awarded ten undergraduate students a total of $50,000 in financial scholarships for the 2019-2020 school year.

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 provides financial support for young leaders who carry the torch of activists like Pedro and mitigate the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in its current form -- in ways inspired by their own passions, insights, originality and conviction.

“We are so proud to support these students and help them achieve their educational and career goals through the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship,” said John Cunningham, executive director of the National AIDS Memorial. “This year’s recipients, each with their own unique personal stories, are making a significant impact on their campuses and in their communities, using their powerful voices to help eliminate stigmas associated with HIV/AIDS through public service.”

The scholarship recipients, attending universities in ten states, will each receive $5,000 to support their educational goals for the 2019-2020 school year. They will be honored on World AIDS Day at a ceremony at the National AIDS Memorial in San Francisco and include the following:

Makayla Dawkins, a freshman at the University of Connecticut, in Hartford, is majoring in Public Health with an emphasis on Health Administration. During high school Makayla helped create the first Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at her high school, holding workshops in partnership with a local queer youth organization, on the emerging needs of young people in her community. She served as a student member of the New Haven Board of Education, the Connecticut State Board of Education, and the New Haven Citywide Student Council.

Grace Gautereaux, a senior at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, is the first three-time recipient of the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship. Grace is a leader in several organizations, such as the Choice Action Team and the University’s Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). Grace has worked closely with the school Diversity leadership to spearhead the Transgender Student Resource Action Committee, helping rewrite the GSA Constitution. Grace will graduate as a HIV/AIDS community health educator and plans will be working for the Reno News and Review on LGBT issues as well as the Nevada State Legislature on LBGT policy reform.

Bailey Holmes-Spencer, a senior at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, is studying sociology with a concentration in public health. She is a student peer educator at Spelman, dedicated to the health and well-being of African American women in her community. She served as a public health intern with the International Black Women’s Congress and as a patient navigator, planning HIV/AIDS initiatives including testing events for LGBTQIA communities. Bailey has traveled to South Africa to conduct research on HIV/AIDS and health disparities. She was a Morehouse/CDC intern for future leaders in minority health.

Bo Hwang, a post-baccalaureate student at UCLA in Los Angeles, California, hopes to use scientific research to uplift communities of color affected by HIV/AIDS. Bo has co-led the HIV Counseling and Testing Coalition; a student led organization at UCLA. Bo believes that conducting culturally appropriate, gender affirming research and providing trans affirming clinical care can greatly alleviate the stigma and raise awareness. Bo hopes to pursue a career in medicine and public health research.
D’Andre Manlove, a freshman at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana. He is a freshman studying biomedical engineering and hopes to follow a career path focused on HIV awareness and prevention. During his junior and senior years in high school, D’Andre has been part of a Biomedical Sciences Program. His year-long capstone project was an in-depth research project on AIDS and the negative stigmas surrounding getting tested.

Ariel Sabillon, a senior at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, currently focuses on HIV anti-criminalization activism. His work focuses on the connections between HIV infection and unreconciled traumas like sexual and community violence, poverty, and immigration. Ariel has established a social media presence that has garnered the attention of young queer men around the world. Ariel recently completed an internship at UNAIDS in Geneva as part of their Gender and Human Rights program.

Jennifer Salazar, a junior at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah, is pursuing a double major in Gender Studies and Sociology. Jennifer’s passion for more inclusive sex education led her to join classes at the Center of Sexual Pleasure and Health and earning her certification as a sexual health resource in 2018. She co-founded a QTPOC (Queer Transgender People of Color) sexual health organization. Jennifer is the president and campus organizer for SURF – Students United for Reproductive Freedom.

Ervin Simmons, a senior at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York, aspires to earn a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, specializing in HIV related risk behavior research. In 2016 he was a research intern at Michigan State University. Since then, Ervin volunteered for AIDS Project New Haven on a CDC funded HIV prevention program and worked as a peer prevention specialist at Odyssey House in Louisiana. He has worked as a research assistant and intern for Syracuse PRIDE, helping in HIV related research.

Jariatu Sta’Llone, a sophomore at the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford, in Bradford Pennsylvania, is pursuing a career in medical journalism. Born in the West African country of Sierra Leone, she was exposed at an early age to the disparate treatment, stigma and discrimination faced by HIV patients. That helped determine her life’s direction. Jariatu previously worked in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) to create workshops that discussed the roles of stigma and discrimination as barriers to care.

Cindy Won, a junior at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, is an aspiring physician/scientist interested in scientific research and clinical care. Cindy has worked for the Center for AIDS Research in Boston. She is now an Emerging Infectious Diseases Scholar at Brown University working to further her studies on HIV/AIDS where her focus is on the intersection between the stigma of HIV/AIDS and social factors that lead to bigger health disparities.

“I am grateful to the National AIDS Memorial for this scholarship, which provides much needed financial support as I pursue my dreams,” said recipient Grace Gautereaux. "It is so meaningful to follow in the footsteps of Pedro Zamora in helping change hearts and minds about HIV and AIDS.”

The National AIDS Memorial started the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship 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 $300,000 in scholarships have been awarded to 88 students.

“The grants provided by Gilead Sciences and Wells Fargo are having a tremendous impact on supporting future leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS,” said Cunningham. “Their financial support and generosity for this scholarship is making a difference in the lives of these students, their educational success and public service work in their communities.”

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. Through the application process, applicants must demonstrate leadership in their efforts to raise greater public awareness about prevention, public policy, treatment and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. The next application open period begins March 1, 2020. To learn more about the scholarship and the National AIDS Memorial, visit www.aidsmemorial.org or call (415) 765-0497.

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