



*Dreamers*  
**AND DOERS**

★ 2023 ★



LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY®



*Dreamers*  
**AND DOERS**

**THE LLS SCHOLARSHIP FOR BLOOD CANCER SURVIVORS  
CLASS OF 2023**



# WHAT IS ONE WORD YOU WOULD USE TO

A word cloud of positive adjectives is centered on a light gray, textured background. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape, with some words being significantly larger than others. The largest words are 'hopeful', 'exc', and 'bright', all in a dark red color. Other words in black include 'optimistic', 'grateful', 'bountiful', 'straight', 'memorable', 'completion', 'magical', 'fulfilling', 'growth', 'generous', 'empowered', 'inspired', 'healthy', 'creative', 'lucky', 'ready', 'stoked', and 'straight'.

empowered  
grateful  
generous  
inspired  
healthy  
creative  
lucky  
hopeful  
exc  
bright  
optimistic  
ready  
bountiful  
straight  
stoked  
memorable  
grateful  
completion  
magical  
fulfilling  
growth

# DESCRIBE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

happy impactful  
exciting positive  
limited joyful  
blessed promising  
determined resilient  
endless innovative  
enthusiastic  
adventurous  
determination  
flourishing  
strength  
inspiring





# CONGRATULATIONS

Dear Scholarship Awardees,

On behalf of everyone at The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS), we offer our heartfelt congratulations to the awardees of the 2023 LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors. Each of you has displayed remarkable courage, grit, and determination—setting your sights high and reaching for your dreams despite setbacks. Our application reviewers were profoundly moved and impressed by your personal stories. We are so proud of you!

Over 70 years ago, our organization was started by a family who lost their son, Robbie to leukemia. Since then, LLS has made tremendous progress by investing in scientific research, patient support, and advocacy to help families facing a blood cancer diagnosis. We understand how challenging it can be to plan for the future during or after cancer treatment—especially when diagnosed as a child or young adult. Hospital stays and interruptions in school can derail educational goals. And the steep cost of cancer care can make affording higher education difficult. The LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors is designed to ease those challenges.

These scholarships would not be possible without the generosity of our incredible sponsors and supporters: The Alex Okafor Family Foundation; Beth Ayres in Memory of Alan M. Ayres; Elbit Systems of America; Tour de Court; Alok Kapoor; ACE Family Foundation; Bridge Investment Group; Cindy Scheehle Millsaps and Darrin Millsaps in Memory of Mike Scheehle; Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation; Genentech, Inc. and Biogen; the Marshall Family; Ronald Weiss and Peggy Ahlin. Because of their commitment to our mission, we can provide much-needed funds to support tuition expenses for survivors like you.

Your future is now, and we can't wait to see what you do next! Congratulations again!



**E. Anders Kolb, MD**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*



**Gwen Nichols, MD**  
*Chief Medical Officer*



# CLASS OF 2023

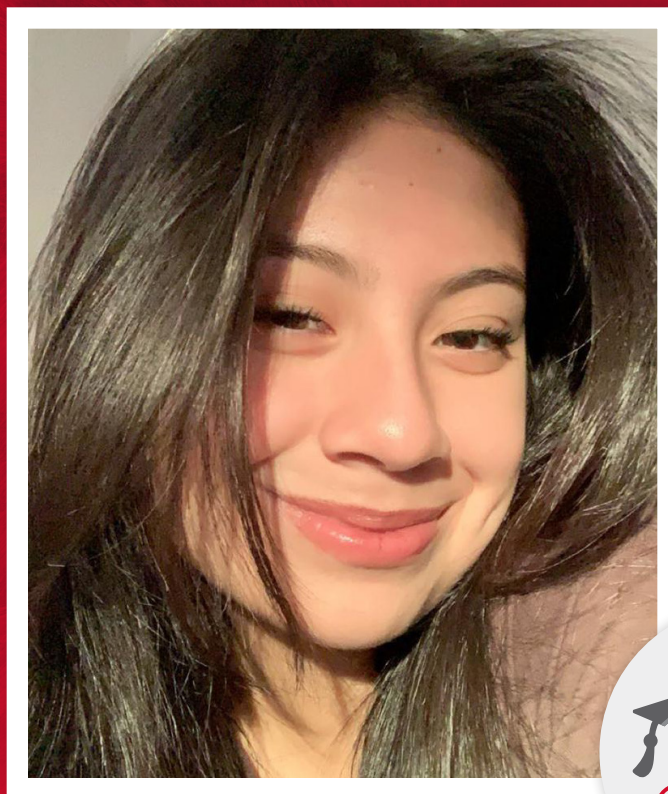
Aamaria B.	David F.	Katherine I.	Natalie B.
Aaron A.	Elizabeth D.	Kim-Mai L.	Natalie R.
Abigail Q.	Ellie T.	Landon T.	Nathaniel H.
Alayna R.-B.	Emily B.	Langley E.	Nicholas W.
Alexander U.	Emily M.	Leia B.	Nicolas B.
Alexis S.	Ethan M.	Lily D.	Nicole L.
Allie S.	Ethar A.	Lindsay T.	Patrick M.
Amanda P.	Faith J.	Luc M.	Patrick M.
Amelia G.	Gabriela R.	Luca C.	Rachael N.
Amy V.	Gary A.	Lydia M.	Reese G.
Annie O.	Giulia P.	Lydia M.	Regina G-Z.
Ashlyn W.	Grace D.	Mackenzie Z.	Ryan C.
Auvren L.	Gracie G.	Madeleine S.	Ryan S.
Bailey D.	Haley A.	Madison C.	Sahara T.
Benjamin H.	Henry S.	Marco G.	Sarah M.
Bharat S.	Isabella T.	Margo S.	Sarah S.
Brigitta O.	Isabelle Jane F.	Mariah M.	Sofia S.
Caeleigh B.	Izabella W.	Martin V.	Summer B.
Caleb C.	Jack P.	Matthew T.	Teresa N.
Carolina H.	Jaidyn W.	Michael D.	Umer S.
Casey T.	James P.	Mollie K.	William A.
Christopher W.	James S.	Molly B.	William K.
Collin H.	Jessica V.	Molly F.	William M.
Colton K.	Julia R.	Morgan L.	William P.
Daniel H.	Julianna W.	Myles M.	Xavier J.-K.
Daniela H.	Kacie F.	Nataleigh H.	Zachary S.





# GABRIELA R.

Hunter College



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
in Memory of Mike Scheehle**

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Hospitals are strange places that can cause negative feelings in patients and visitors alike. It is a place where life is either given or taken and all who enter are not there by chance. It is a place of fear and yet a place where many feel safe. I have had quite a long and complex relationship with hospitals. Mount Sinai is both the place where so much was taken from me and the place where I hope to give so much of myself in return.

At the age of two, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and life dramatically changed for me and my family. In a split second, life became more complicated, and it was all out of my hands. Cancer affected me physically and mentally, causing me to lose my hair, my self-esteem, and my ability to see past my circumstances. Experiencing depression, anxiety, and fear of the unknown kept me locked away from discovering my strengths. Birthday parties in the hospital became a tradition, sleeping next to machines—who I thought of as my only friends—gave me the most consolation.



I'm thankful for my favorite nurse, Amy, who made me feel unique and empowered me to be brave. And my mother, who never left my side and gave me the space to dream beyond the four walls of my room. And I am grateful for the work and dedication my doctor invested to help me survive.

Though there were moments of doubt and uncertainty, in a strange way, I became brave. It was a strength I was not aware I possessed and has allowed me to take risks and experience personal growth. Strength and bravery in the face of uncertainty and being placed in a situation outside of my control has allowed me to apply those skills in my academic and personal life. Looking back on my experience at 17 years old and having been in remission for 12 years, I realize that I am resilient and have a purpose. My experiences at Mount Sinai have taught me that being diagnosed with cancer does not define me, I am more than that and it has only made me stronger.

Being called a "cancer survivor" inspires me to reciprocate the kindness shown to me by my physicians and nurses. I envision myself working in the same hospital that I grew up in, saving the lives of children who remind me of myself when I was a small child. My diagnosis has fueled my desire to add value to my community and my drive to become an impactful leader and advocate for those in need. My journey through remission has brought me to love the hospital environment, and now I dream of becoming an oncology nurse practitioner.

My experience living with cancer has helped me overcome many challenges throughout my life, develop my social skills and independence. It has also taught me the value of making an impact on others and instilled in me the desire to reciprocate the genuine kindness that was shown to me, many years ago on the 6th floor of Mount Sinai.

Receiving the LLS scholarship would give my parents peace of mind and allow me to achieve my goals in pursuing my dreams of becoming an ONP. I would put the money I get from the LLS scholarship to good use by using it to pay for the textbooks my professors have assigned me, nursing necessities, and as part of my tuition. The scholarship will give me the opportunity to demonstrate my drive to continue working toward my aspirations and goals. As I overcome life's challenges, I have learned to stand tall in my truth and unwavering pride in cancer being a part of my strength. I am most grateful that I will be able to live my purpose by pursuing a career as an Oncology Nurse Practitioner. I hope the genuine kindness pours out in the work that I do, just as my nurse, Amy, did in every interaction with me.





# MARCO G.

Southern Utah University



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Tour De Court Award**

I was diagnosed with leukemia two days before my third birthday. Many of my childhood memories were in hospitals. Some things were scary like needles, IVs, and medication that made me feel weird. Some things were fun like visits from people bringing us presents and making friends with other children in the playroom. I went into remission when I was seven and I thought that would be the end of it. I still had to get my blood drawn every month for years and a few times we had relapse scares. Whenever I got a headache or a stomachache, I was rushed to the ER and subjected to a multitude of tests that normal kids never had to endure. Most importantly, I had to deal with death and face my own mortality at such a young age. Some of my friends relapsed all the time, and a few of them didn't survive. All of this led to paralyzing anxiety and survivor's guilt.

I felt like I was living on borrowed time—like something was coming for me too. One day when I was twelve, I had a grand mal seizure. I was taken to the hospital where I had another one. While there, they did a CT scan of my brain, and I watched my mother's reaction when they talked to her. She told me that I had to do a spinal tap and an MRI the



next day. I knew they were concerned about a brain tumor. Even though I was young, these things were familiar. After a few long, grueling days in the hospital waiting for results, they told me I had developed epilepsy. They believed it was related to anxiety. For most people, that would be horrible news, but considering my health history, it was a great relief.

They say every dark cloud has a silver lining. That last scare changed everything for me. Instead of feeling sorry for myself as I always had, I felt very lucky. For whatever reason, I was still alive, and I was still healthy. So, I was going to live every day to the fullest and go for my dreams with everything I had in me. I worked hard to learn to meditate and control my fears. When I was in middle school, I had no friends because I was so shy, I could not talk to people at all. I couldn't even muster the courage to say hello to people or answer them when they asked me a question. I couldn't order food in a restaurant when I went out to eat with my family. I made it my mission after that to change. None of us know when our last day could be, so instead of spending my life worrying about dying, I decided to live.

I studied hard in school and got a 3.8 GPA, even though the medication I was on made it hard to focus. I got involved in activities. I stayed away from alcohol and drugs. I focused on exercising every day and eating healthy. I actually learned to control my seizures. After three years without them, I was able to get off the medication and get my driver's license. I went away to college in a neighboring state and have been living on my own for the past two years. I have made friends and I wake up every morning grateful for another day of life and health. Had I grown up healthy, I don't know that I would ever fully understand what a true blessing it is to be alive.

During my darkest, scariest moments, I was able to escape through entertainment. My dream is to work in the entertainment industry creating tv shows and movies. I loved to watch them when I was overcome with worry, and my hope is to someday create them as well, so they can help bring peace to others like me.

I am a student at Southern Utah University and currently have a 3.6 GPA, on track to graduate with a degree in Media Production. I have pushed myself to overcome my shyness, including a great job on campus filming sports in conjunction with ESPN. I am excited to learn about working with a camera, editing, and creating all the special effects. My dreams are coming true little by little, and I am grateful for any help I can get to make those dreams come true. I have found inner peace and strength and have learned that sometimes the worst of circumstances are the very thing that gives us that peace.





# MOLLIE K.

Houston Community College



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*Okizu* comes from the Sioux language, and means, “To come together, to heal from hurt, to make whole.” Essentially, *Okizu* means unity.

Since moving to California post-treatment, I have been attending a summer camp called Camp Okizu, a place for childhood cancer survivors and current patients to bond over shared experiences and recreate outdoors. As campers, we were given the ability to dance, make ice cream, go swimming in the lake, play volleyball, swap friendship bracelets, and sleep under the stars—all while acknowledging one another’s histories and living at peace with them. I found so much beauty in the fact that sharing your story was optional – no one would question how you looked or acted. They simply took you for you.

Then, in 2020, a tragedy occurred. Camp Okizu was burned to the ground in the California wildfires. Small joys—like giving my fellow cabinmates hugs upon arriving, picking blackberries from along the wheelchair-accessible docks,



and barbecuing with nurses and doctors who I would've otherwise thought were unapproachable and scary—were stripped away.

Losing Okizu caused me to find the importance of community, diversity, and nature. I find so much joy in backpacking, hiking, and being outside because I can break from the pressures of urban life. I want other people to be able to enjoy the same outdoor spaces and experiences, regardless of who they are.

After doing some research for my college application essays, I discovered the perfect word for what I want to pursue: rewilding. Rewilding is an approach to ecological restoration and conservation that emphasizes bringing an environment back to its natural state.

This could include things like re-introducing local plants and animals to urban areas, implementing greenspaces, and granting people more access to their local parks and undeveloped land.

To pursue this concept, I have spent my free time learning outdoor skills and sharing them with younger generations, specifically through Boy Scouts of America. I have cultivated confidence in my knowledge about building fires safely, first aid wilderness responses, and how to lead a diverse group in outdoor adventures so that they can in turn develop their own confidence. I've spent time learning about the local ecology in California—everything from the lace lichen that decorates low-growing Oak trees, to the towering Redwoods that stand tall along our golden coast. I am currently taking classes on the physics of stars and black holes, and the biology of evolving Animalia at UC San Diego, and I look forward to exploring the intersection between humanities and science.

I recently attended a lecture on Plitidepsin—a molecule that comes from Mediterranean Sea squirts and treats multiple myeloma. Though I know very little about pharmaceutical sciences and cell biology, I was mesmerized by the fact that a dainty little sea creature could host toxins which could cure cancers! What other superpowers do our ocean and forest creatures yield? Our oceans help save cancer patients like me and in turn, we must go on to help our world—to heal our environments and vulnerable communities from the impacts of climate change and to make it whole again. Okizu does not only exist behind summer camp's cobbler gates. It is something I can practice in my everyday life. I can use my ability as a cancer survivor to heal communities and appreciate life for what it is.

Chemotherapy and cancer treatment have had a negative impact on my family financially. It forced my parents to move from state to state, away from family, in order to maintain their jobs. With the scholarship money, I hope to partially pay for my academics at UC San Diego, relieving some of the financial burden. I know that my parents simply want me to live my life without restraint and explore my passions, which is exactly what I aim to do. I am grateful for my life, and with the aid of outside resources, I hope to share my gratitude with the world.





# REGINA G.-Z.

Miami Dade College



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**



One Sunday morning, you are looking across the kitchen overlooking the ocean sunrise of Miami, making eggs and pancakes, brewing a cup of coffee for your significant other, and petting your cats Bucatini and Penne, whom I like to refer to as my kids. With the intense aroma of roasted Colombian coffee beans, you breathe the life you dreamt of living. It's short of saying that by the end of 2021, everything was a perfect, loving, stable relationship, working on opening a restaurant, building a community that fosters sustainability, the most precious fur babies, the family was doing well, and the new year seemed filled with opportunities coming my way. But... I was entirely mistaken. Indeed, life had many opportunities coming my way, just none that I could ever possibly picture.

This story of unfortunate events began on New years eve when I got dumped. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, what awful timing! However, this was just the start. Beginning of January 2022, I tearfully said goodbye to Bucatini and Penne and moved back to my mom's house. I came to find out she was depressed for the simple reason of my father cheating on her with no other than her best friend. The restaurant wasn't going to open anytime soon, I had no energy to continue doing volunteer work, and well, needless to say, I was heartbroken. It's difficult to explain; when your heart is so wounded you forget about the rest of your body, your overall health starts to decline without you even noticing



how bad it is until it's pretty bad. In Middle January, my health was more fragile than ever; I still did not know this. Diarrhea and fever became my best buddies, never failing to pay me a daily visit, and I welcomed them, believing my shrimp tacos were what kept them coming over. By the end of January, my life had shifted entirely; I now found myself in Mexico City laying on a hospital bed, no windows, no ocean and realizing shrimp tacos were not the problem. The problem was more profound than I could ever imagine...it was encrypted in my DNA, born in my blood cells; it was acute lymphoblastic Philadelphia positive leukemia.

Who would have thought that my biggest worry was overcooking sunny-side-up eggs only a month ago? Now my biggest concerns were 1. looking like an egg and 2. questioning how many days I have left ahead of me.

This question came with no easy answer; it also came with more unpleasant news. My cancer was growing fast, meaning the clock started to tick, and decisions had to be made quickly. Leukemia interrupted not only the little stability I had left back home but also took away many of the activities that brought me joy. I had to move to a different country and start treatment immediately to improve my living chances. Then I soon learned about treatment's complications and side effects, one of them being that treatment would leave me infertile. "Yikes... what is next?" I asked myself as death was lurking around the corner.

The idea of loss only crossed my mind when referring to people who have passed away. However, during this time, loss started to craft a new definition. I began to see loss as something tangible, darker, and scarier than death itself. For me, to lose meant no longer being healthy, no longer being in a loving relationship, not being around the community I have fostered and built, not being able to pet my kids, not continuing a career, and not having a stable nuclear family. However, most heartbreaking, it meant no longer having options... options that you don't question at twenty-three years old because they seem so far away. Not having a say on whether I make it or not, no longer having the choice on how my physical appearance will change or my quality of life, and not having an opportunity to choose if I wanted my own children in the future.

As you read through my story, you can see that a cancer diagnosis immediately affects everything you once knew about yourself. Yes, I have lost many things, and I have fears like many of us do, but during this time, I chose to shift my focus to staying confident and living in the reality I was given. Not everyone diagnosed with cancer will experience positive life lessons, but some do. Some can look past suffering, finding life-changing truths. I feel incredibly blessed for all the heartbreaking things that led me to discover my cancer. Timing, as I always say, is perfect, even in unpleasant ways. This journey is yet to be continued, lived, loved... with infinite lessons remaining to be learned. But the most significant takeaway from this colossal experience is reminding myself that despite losing my once "dream life" and my ability to make some choices, every day, the universe grants me a new opportunity to live the life I choose. I choose love, freedom, positivity, strength, truth, beauty, and the smell of Colombian roasted coffee beans on a Sunday morning. Regardless of life throwing all kinds of challenges your way... I discovered that your dream life is only a choice away.

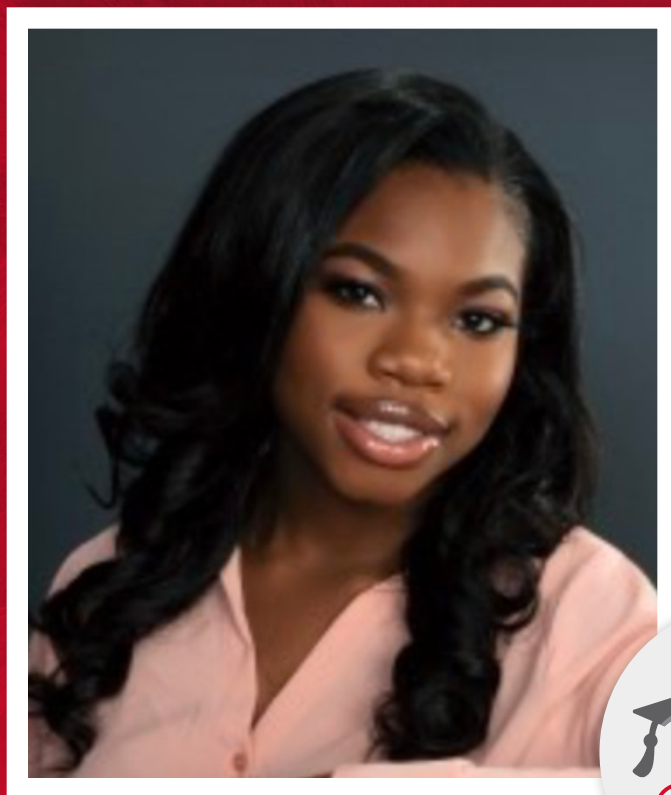
Chemotherapy and I became great friends, so close that it gifted me something priceless: time. With this extraordinary gift, not only have I been able to mend my body and soul, but I have also been able to, once again, despite all things crumbling to the ground, dream of a life I want to live. While undergoing treatment, I realized that my passion for art, educating people, bringing communities together, and helping others is not limited to the production of their food and experiences as a chef...With all this time and undergoing hardships, I was moved. I understood that my heart had space for more; more love, more people, and more healing. I am now poised to begin a new career in Psychology and Art History. Dreaming of becoming an Art Therapist one day and helping all communities impacted by this voracious disease find closure, recover and heal in creative and passionate ways. My dream for the future is to help people overcome anything life tosses at them and to brighten up their lives. I have always been fortunate enough to have a family and a community that has aided me to grow and supported me in my culinary arts career. Despite how much I have saved up these past couple of years to continue furthering my education, now my health has been a priority for me and everyone around me. I am applying for the scholarship to cover the tuition costs at Miami Dade Community College. Being awarded this scholarship will be an effective stress reliever providing me with the ability to avoid taking out a loan for school, enabling me to exclusively focus on my education, and most importantly, allowing me to start shaping this dream into my reality.





# SAHARA T.

Spelman College



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

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I am a Junior Psychology major at Spelman College, the country's #1 Historically Black College and University (HBCU). I have a 3.5 GPA and an active member of the Alpha Lambda Delta National Honors Society, Health Careers Club, Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students, and on the E-Board for the Entrepreneurship Club. Additionally, I am the Junior Class Council Treasurer.

I plan to impact the world positively, and I believe that my core values of community service and academic scholarship make me a great candidate for the LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors.

In August 2021, two weeks before my scheduled return to Spelman, I was diagnosed with Stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma. The diagnosis was a complete shock to my family and me. Very early, I dedicated myself to fighting and winning the toughest battle in my life. Scans found an 11 cm tumor in front of my heart and cancer in my groin, neck, and spine. Instead of returning to school with my peers, I took a leave of absence from Spelman and



began six months of chemotherapy treatments while taking online Humanities courses at my local community college, which I received an “A”.

Luckily my October PET scan showed no cancer. My cancer is in remission. I returned to Spelman for the Spring semester one week after my last chemotherapy appointment.

As a cancer survivor, I am more passionate about advocacy and support for the cancer community. Advocacy matters since my cure prognosis were over 90%, which I am grateful for. I am a cancer survivor. Unfortunately, not everyone is so lucky. I want to continue advocating for cancer research to find a cure for every type of cancer. Ultimately, I wish for a world where cancer does not exist. In the meantime, I will dedicate my life to raise funds for cancer research and being involved in cancer organizations. I have raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and Cherished Creations Inc. Cherished Creations is a wish-filling non-profit organization that supports children and young adults suffering from chronic illnesses. I benefited from both of these organizations. It is a pleasure to give back.

Prior to my cancer diagnosis, I was an active member of serving my community. I volunteered at ArtStream, a theatrical non-profit providing classes and social activities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I helped ‘ArtStreamers’ recall dance routines and lines during their theatrical performances. It was an enriching experience assisting others to boost their self-confidence and performance skills. Additionally, during the school year, I was a SpelREADS tutor. I helped to close the learning gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I tutored students at Harper Archer Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, and helped improve their reading skills. Also, to need for an alt sheethis summer, I completed 34 hours of community service at the Capital Area Food Bank, and So Others Might Eat (SOME), a homeless shelter in D.C. I assisted in packaging meals for those struggling with hunger in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area.

My career goal is to become a doctor. Black women account for less than 3% of U.S. doctors (Maria Aspan). This percentage is a staggering number for the 21st century. As a future black female physician, I plan to overcome all the barriers to becoming a successful doctor and fill a critical gap in the medical community. As a medical doctor, I will advocate and resolve healthcare issues that impact the cancer community. Being a doctor achieves my professional goals of treating people suffering from medical conditions that limit their quality of life.

In 2019, I was an intern for the Mentored Experience to Expand Opportunities in Research (METEOR) Program Internship at Washington, D.C.'s Children's National Hospital. This program solidified my interest in the medical field. I conducted a research project during my internship with Dr. Elizabeth Wells (Vice President of the Neuroscience and Behavioral Medicine Center). Our research sought to understand whether patients were satisfied with having a headache nurse as part of their neurology visit. This research aimed to improve the headache program by learning about patients' experiences measured in satisfaction surveys. The project involved data analysis and a research presentation at the end of the program. While shadowing doctors during their rounds and consults, I saw patients with neurological disorders such as epilepsy, concussions, and tumors.

Receiving the LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors will help me achieve my goals while covering my school tuition. It is vital that I receive assistance in paying for my undergraduate studies since I need to attend medical school, which is very expensive. With the high cost of my medical services, the scholarship will assist my mom in paying for my tuition. She is a supportive mother raising a brother with special needs.

If selected for the LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, I will work diligently to raise funds for cancer research, cures, and patient support. Hopefully, one day we will all witness the end of awful diseases that destroy lives. Thank you.





# AAMARIA B.

Georgia Southern University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

When I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), my life shifted into survival mode. In the years I have spent in remission, I have lived a life that is far greater than anything I could have ever imagined before cancer. My ambition is what keeps me striving toward my goals and I get a kick out of proving others wrong when it comes to what I can achieve.

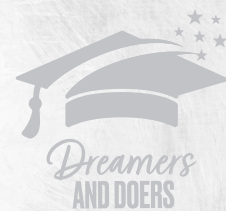
My cancer diagnosis taught me the true meaning of having empathy and the ability to genuinely connect with others. It has taught me to focus on what really matters in life and not focus so much on the bad. No matter how things are going, I am still here, alive, and healthy. No matter what it says on paper, what the doctors say, or the limits others put on you, you can still push yourself to achieve more, and you'll be surprised at what you can accomplish. I changed the way I thought about and coped with my disability and I am still in control of my life.





# AARON A.

Virginia Tech



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the ACE Family Foundation Award**

Growing up as a cancer survivor spokesperson for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, I've spoken at schools, taken part in campaigns, and even thrown out the first pitch at an Orioles game. And as I got older, I have seen how much cancer has affected not only my family, but countless families in my community. So, I was humbled to be nominated to take part in The LLS Student of the Year Campaign. I never imagined being able to raise \$146,000 in seven short weeks to fund two cancer research projects for acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

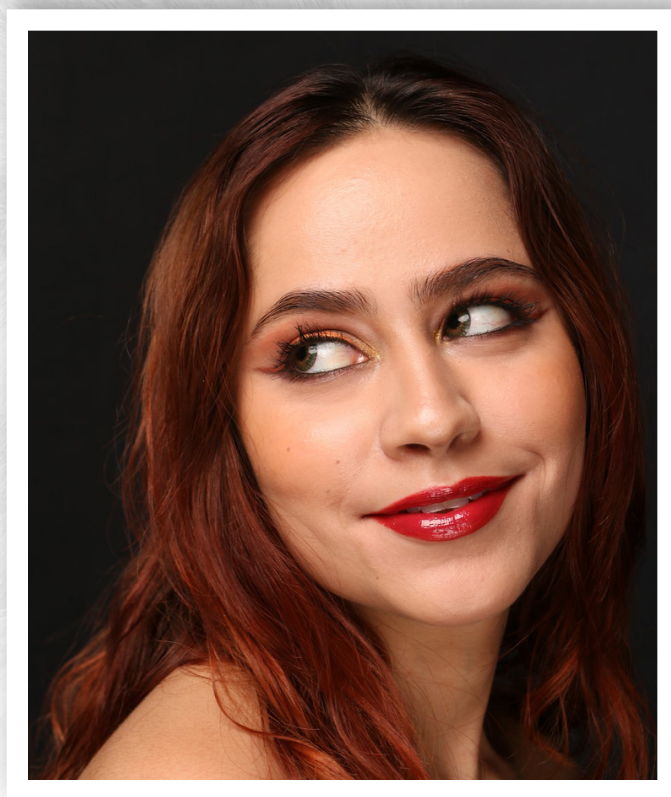
When I was part of the Student of the Year Campaign, LLS offered bonding events—one being a tour of an oncologist's lab at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Afterwards, we were greeted by lab director Dr. Patrick Brown, researcher, professor, and one of my oncologists from when I was a baby. He remembered me, I told him I wanted to be a cancer researcher, and I ended up interning with him and his lab team my entire senior year of high school!





# ABIGAIL Q.

Cinema Makeup School



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The lessons we learn from the hardships we encounter can be fundamental to later success.

Looking back on my 21 years, being diagnosed at the age of 5 impacted my career choice and my calling in life. Because of my diagnosis, I received amazing opportunities to give back. I was LLS Girl of The Year in Hollywood Florida, one of the Pennies for Patients, the child survivor for Relay for Life Run, and I spoke at a Light The Night walk. I volunteered at my local LLS office helping do whatever needed to be done. LLS was there for my family through treatment, so I participated in Student of the Year, where I raised over \$5,000.

When I got diagnosed, I was given the opportunity to have a Make A Wish and visit the set of a TV show. My family and I watched them film scenes, hung out during takes, and had the best day ever. Something inside of me was sparked and that day, I aspired to become a makeup artist in the film industry.





# ALAYNA R.-B.

Monmouth University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

At the age of seventeen, instead of starting my senior year of high school, I found myself sitting in a doctor's office being told, "You have cancer."

Because being able to keep your hair is who you are—mentally, physically, and emotionally—I was able to convince Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Pediatrics to research the cold cap and scalp cooling treatment used in adult care during chemo to help prevent the complete loss of hair. I became the first pediatric patient at MSK to use the cold cap, finishing chemotherapy with 99% of my hair.

This inspired my foundation. Our mission: to help provide financial assistance and support for adolescent and young adult cancer patients wishing to use the cold cap while undergoing chemotherapy.

As many hardships cancer has brought, it has also brought me good. Fast forward a year, I'm officially cancer free, I've started college, and I'm in the nursing program!





# ALEXANDER U.

University of California, San Diego



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

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When I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML), I went from being an academically involved, physically active, slightly overachieving college sophomore to being a prisoner in the hospital. The months I spent there strongly influenced my dreams to travel and explore the world when I'm older.

I spent this summer coaching my old high school cross country team, sharing lessons from my battle with leukemia such as keeping a positive attitude and giving it your best in the face of adversity and uncontrollable challenges. I want to run a marathon and participate in a triathlon to help spread awareness for children with leukemia.

I've learned that life doesn't always go as planned: There will always be major obstacles that try to prevent you from reaching your goals. This experience has taught me that putting effort into major life goals can motivate you to overcome any obstacle. I want to serve as an inspiration for young people dealing with leukemia and demonstrate that this illness will not stop them from accomplishing their goals in the future.





# ALEXIS S.

Indiana University



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I never finished my first semester of college. One weekend I got what seemed like the flu and a blood test later I was in the emergency room. A bone marrow biopsy later, I was in the hospital for weeks. Being alone in an oncology ward gives you a lot of time to reflect, for better and for worse. I was able to realize I wasn't happy—even before my diagnosis.

Now that my active treatment is done, I've gone back to school part-time as a history major. I'm interested in potentially working in cultural resource management, museum curation, or archival science. I will most likely need to attend graduate school eventually, but my primary goals in life now are to get my bachelor's degree, find a career that gives me fulfillment, and maintain my health.

By going through the worst experience of my life I have found the most peace I've ever had. I've learned to take life both more and less seriously. Whatever happens, I'm going to be okay because I'll find a way to be.



★ ★  
★  
**ALLIE S.**  
Ohio University



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

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When I was 15 years old, I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and, over a span of eight months, spent 179 days hospitalized. I had multiple near-death experiences during five rounds of chemotherapy, and due to Covid-19, was forced to face over half of the journey alone—except for my parents and medical team. I was isolated, scared, and pushed to my limit after every round of chemotherapy. Yet, in July of 2020, I rang the bell in the lobby of Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, and I’ve been in remission ever since.

I was traumatized, overwhelmed, confused, and struggling with mental health. No one around me knew how to help. Because I didn’t want anybody to go through what I did, I designed my own website “Remission Recovery Reality,” a non-profit, blog, and support page. And I became an LLS First Connection Volunteer and was chosen as the adult candidate for Visionary of the Year for 2023.

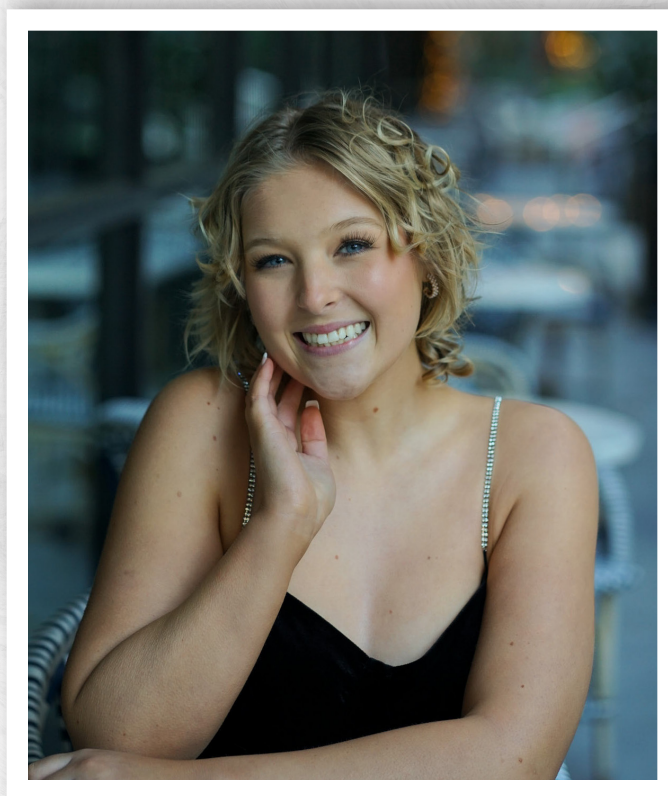
I believe that being diagnosed was the push I needed to dive into the advocacy work I’ve always wanted to do.





# AMANDA P.

Baylor University



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It was at the very end of my junior year of high school when I started to get sick. And, after weeks of testing, I finally got my cancer diagnosis. I returned to school in the fall, but it was different; I had lost my hair over the summer so coming back with such a dramatic change was incredibly nerve-wracking. My support system of family and friends and the four teachers I had that semester made everything possible.

At this time, I found LLS. I started a Light The Night fundraiser. With the help of my teachers, I created a fundraiser at school, and I was able to raise over \$64,000 and become the second-highest individual fundraiser for the Dallas event. This year I am grateful to be the Honored Hero for Light The Night in both Dallas, Texas, and the Charleston, South Carolina events.

I am currently majoring in Elementary Education. I hope to have the same impact on children's lives as the teachers who impacted mine. Someday, I hope to change a child's life.





# AMELIA G.

University of Vermont



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

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I think about my experience as a young adult impacted by cancer as a choiceless endeavor that I'd never wish upon anyone. I recognize the ways in which this has changed me for the better, but also recognize the anxiety and depression that has affected all aspects of my life. For that very reason, I have become as involved as I can be in the cancer community to spread awareness about the effects of mental health, post treatment.

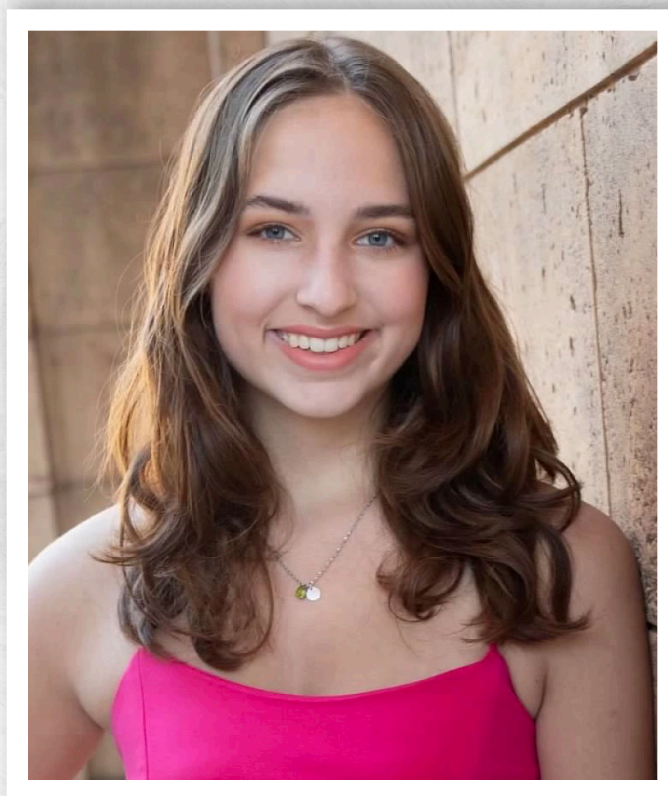
My experience with cancer and the mental health repercussions of life after being diagnosed, have given me the ability to empathize with those struggling with mental health in a way that I did not used to understand. I am looking forward to continuing to study Criminal Justice Reform and advocating as a leader of the Prison Partnership club, and I am also excited to be able to use my art, my language skills, and my studies in biology to advocate for other cancer survivors.



★ ★  
★  
**AMY V.**



**California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo**



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In March of 2016, I was diagnosed with advanced-stage 3 Burkitt's lymphoma and was given a 3-month life expectancy if treatment wasn't started immediately. "You have cancer." Only three words, but those words ended my childhood.

I missed the second half of fifth grade and finished my treatment 4 weeks before the first day of sixth grade. I struggled when I first went into remission: I had no friends and was constantly bullied. I felt as if the world was punishing me for surviving cancer. Through therapy, I came to the conclusion that even though my treatment was short, it was still traumatic.

Cancer gave me a new perspective on life. In my freshman year, I started assisting in dance classes. In my junior year, I was given the rewarding opportunity to teach my own class. And I developed a passion for helping kids that don't feel like they fit in participating in a buddy program called Team Vacaville.

I did not choose to have cancer, but I can choose how to make it positively affect my life. My goal: To study construction management.





# ANNIE O.

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors Award,  
in Memory of Alan M. Ayres**

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I believe that challenges are what shape us into the individuals we are today. The hardest of these challenges began when I discovered I had leukemia. I felt like I was losing control of my life: I had an illness that was dictating my physical and my mental health. After a long struggle with anxiety, I decided to focus on the things that I could control. One thing that got me through this uncertain time in my life was organization. I found that the more organized I kept things, the less stress I felt, and I realized that I could turn what has become a passion of mine into something that could help others.

Today, I am so lucky to have survived my illness and am now almost ten years in remission. I know how crippling anxiety can feel and, in the future, I hope to minimize that feeling for others. My future goal is to create my own organizing company. I want to leave customers feeling stress-free by giving them functional and sustainable arrangements within their homes.





# ASHLYNN W.

Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes–Jewish College



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors Award,  
the Tour De Court Award**

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I was diagnosed with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) on August 6th of 2019. I went into remission on October 23rd, 2019, and finished my treatments on November 25th, 2021. Once my treatments were over, I started focusing on the goals I wanted to achieve. The idea of a bucket list enticed me. I immediately began to create my own list and complete the things on it—doing thrill-seeking activities such as skydiving and zip-lining and even getting my scuba diving license.

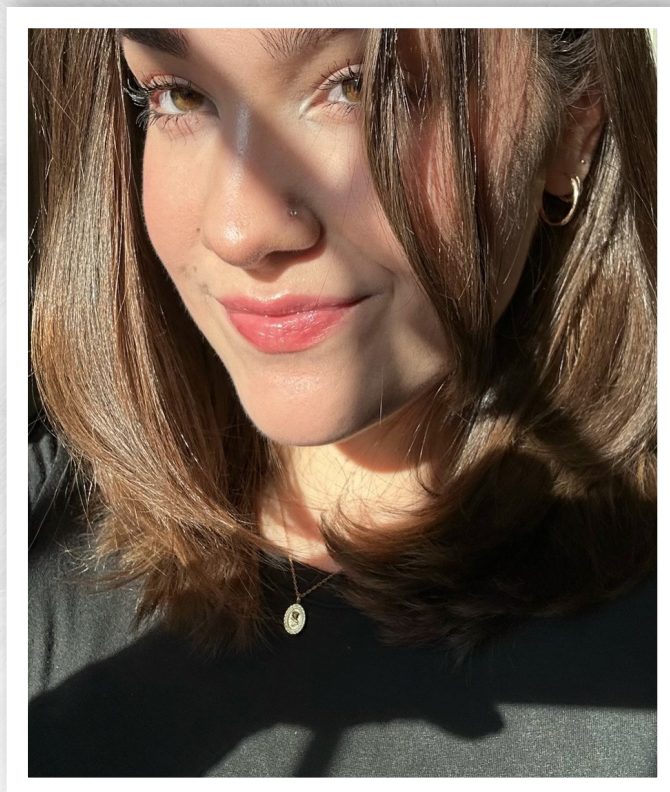
I can truthfully say that my cancer was one of my best teachers yet and the lessons I've learned since being diagnosed have changed my life for the better. One of the many reasons I wanted to become a pediatric nurse is to one day give children the hope they need to continue fighting their battle. I want to show them how important it is to never give up and that there is always light at the end of any tunnel.





# AUVREN L.

James Madison University



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Just before Christmas on December 23rd, 2020, a biopsy confirmed what I had been dreading: I had stage 3 Hodgkin's lymphoma. The strain my diagnosis took on my mental health was indescribable. Nothing seemed to reduce my anxiety, so I turned to my artwork, spending hours on end drawing line after line. For me, the lines allowed me to explore another world where I didn't have cancer, where I could be at peace.

Throughout my treatment, I would bring unfinished art pieces into the infusion center to work on to keep my mind occupied. The art therapist in my oncology center would go around to the other patients and draw or paint with them. In doing so, she brought smiles to their faces, something I didn't often see at the hospital. I always knew I wanted to pursue a career in art but by seeing how an art therapist interacted and benefited patients' lives, I realized I could take it a step further and use my knowledge of art to help people.





# BAILEY D.

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater



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When we were eight, my twin sister, Lily, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). She underwent two years of harsh treatments that completely changed our whole family. As Lily neared the end of treatment, we became excited about returning to normal. Unfortunately, our future turned out to be everything but that. At ten years old, I began to present symptoms of the same illness that had consumed our lives. And in an almost unheard-of situation, I was also diagnosed with ALL.

I absolutely loved school, but I was unable to attend full-time. What inspired me to keep going were the amazing teachers that were willing to go out of their way to help me. Because of them, I was able to stay on track with my schooling and maintain my relationships with my peers. Their impact has inspired me to pursue a degree in education so I can hopefully influence my students in a similar way. Without cancer in my life, I do not think I would have such a substantial focus on helping others.





# BENJAMIN H.

Florida State University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

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The summer before my senior year of high school, I thought I had it all figured out. But, instead, I received a shocking diagnosis: primary mediastinal large B-cell lymphoma. My world flipped upside down, but my plans and purpose became clear.

An hour before my first treatment, I met Anais. She was adorable, could not have been more than 5, and completely bald. Making her laugh and feeling her positive energy made me forget about my treatment. Without realizing it, this little girl brought me so much happiness and strength. Throughout my treatment, the love and the joy that I gave out was returned to me, and it has shown me that love is the most important medicine. And I want to spread that to as many people as I can.

During my experience, I became intrigued with the intricacies of running a hospital, so I plan to become a hospital administrator to help people receive the highest quality of treatment possible. I can see myself helping people behind the scenes, making sure that the facility runs with efficiency and care.





# BRIGITTA O.

Whitman College



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

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I was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia (AML) when I was eight months old. I relapsed when I was two years old and received a bone marrow transplant, which saved my life. I grew up caught between two worlds: a world in which I am the “lucky” cancer survivor who does not remember my diagnosis, and the world of my non-cancer peers who had no idea what my body had gone through. My third diagnosis came a week after I graduated high school: follicular thyroid carcinoma (FTC). The summer I was supposed to be preparing for college was a whirlwind of doctor appointments and tests.

All my doctors and nurses used to tell me: “you’ll be a great doctor one day!” The diagnosis of thyroid cancer was a wake-up call for me and now I am on the pre-med track. I want to be a part of this era in science, a turning point where new medicines and treatments are coming out for a multitude of illnesses that were untreatable not many years ago.





# CAELEIGH B.

James Madison University



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My diagnosis was scarier than I admitted to anyone. I smiled more to cover up how I really felt. Now I know that even behind my smiles, the trauma of having leukemia forever changed me. And every day, I live with the fear of it recurring.

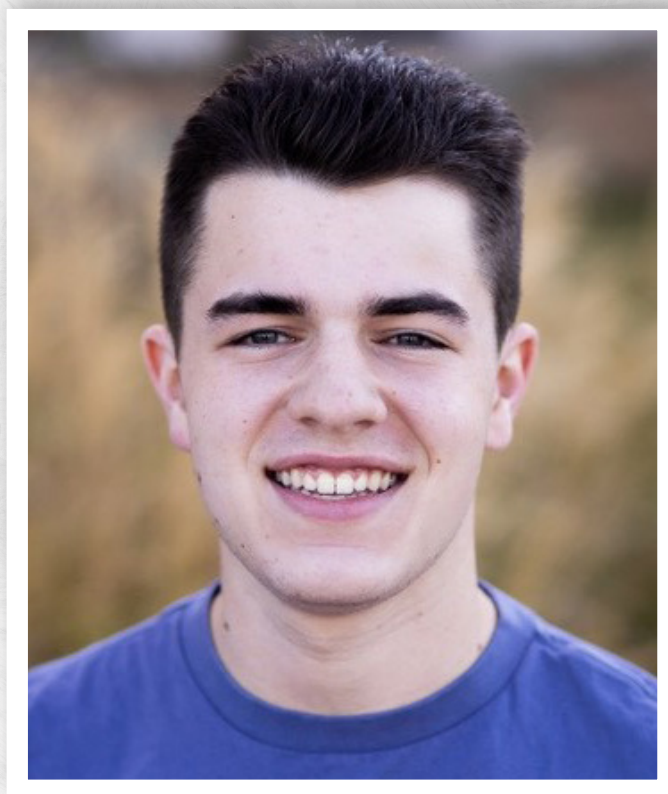
Focusing on the good and paying it forward is what I learned as a 12-year-old battling and surviving leukemia. Now, at 18, I know goals, small or large, are achievable. Running a triathlon, raising money for the Jimmy Fund, overcoming personal fears of public speaking, and conquering social anxiety can come from focusing on the good. As horrific as my diagnosis and treatment were, so much positivity has resulted. I have become a more empathetic person with a clear vision of what I would like to do with my life. This experience was extraordinarily tough to live through, but it made me want to be a healing ray of sunshine and positivity for children. Someday, I will be the nurse with the colorful scrubs, providing comfort to young patients facing a battle like mine.





# CALEB C.

Oral Roberts University



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If there is one thing on earth that is universally hated, I believe it is cancer. So much progress has been made in the treatment of all kinds of cancer, but there is so much left to do. I would love to be able to contribute to helping get rid of this disease. I know what it is like to have it. I know that it is a mental battle as much as it is a physical battle. I know how much it impacts not only the patient but the patient's friends and family as well. And I know it is one of the hardest things someone can go through.

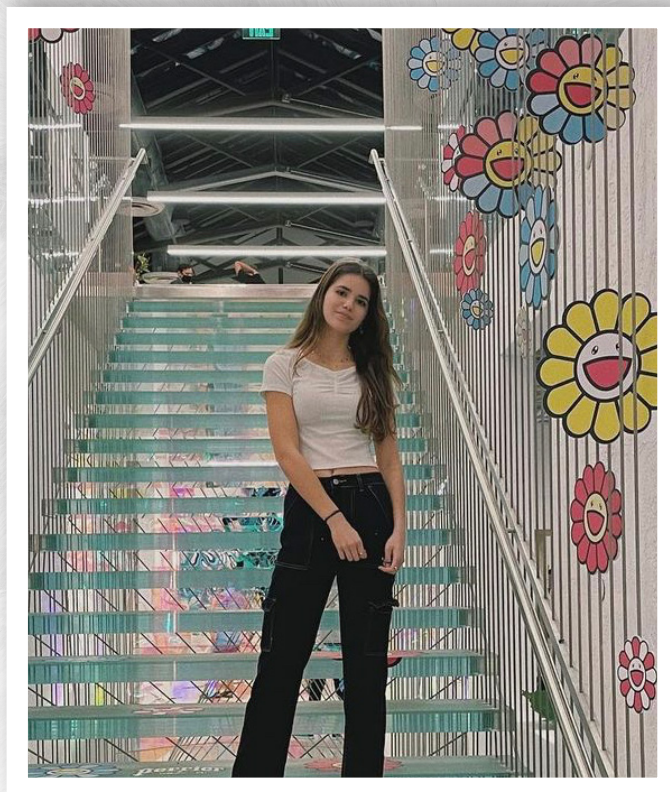
Five months after I began treatment for precursor B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (B-cell ALL), I learned to never compare my situation with others and never to assume I know what someone is going through. But the most impactful thing I've discovered so far is that it is best to live day by day—it's much harder to be here, in the present, when I am worried about the trials of tomorrow.





# CAROLINA H.

The George Washington University



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The three years that I underwent chemotherapy were hard. While my friends got to play and go to school, I was plugged into an IV machine, took blood work, and received intrathecal chemo in my spine. I repeatedly told myself that everything I had to endure would cure me and kill the bad guy (when I was little, I referred to cancer as the bad guy).

Wandering through the hospital I felt consoled but at the same time there was this deep sadness and pity for those who were going through difficult times. I thought to myself “Why do innocent and good people have to go through terrible things?” Those thoughts, combined with my fascination with psychology and the inner workings of the criminal mind, made me decide that there would be no better job for me than working as an FBI agent: fighting crime, helping civilians, and making our country more secure and safe. I want to make a difference and positive impact on a large scale, and what better way to do that than by working in the FBI?





# CASEY T.

University of Southern California



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors Award, in Memory of Alan M. Ayres

Simultaneously, while receiving the news I had lymphoma, I also heard amazing, unexpected news—I'd gotten into my dream school, The University of Southern California. I'll never forget sitting in my hospital bed. Amid the balloons and stuffed animals was a big white envelope letting me know I got in. From the moment I was diagnosed with lymphoma, I belonged to the illness. No college. No work. No me. Just cancer.

People don't look at you the same. My disease was all anyone saw. It felt like there was no part of my life that cancer didn't reach and taint in some way. My stress and anxiety levels soared to new heights so, I turned towards meditation. I started meditating at least twice a day. This gave the days structure and purpose, creating habits I never had. I am putting myself back together: one piece, one goal, one day at a time. This illness will not define the person I am becoming. My future and the goals I have for it will be cancer free, just like me.





# CHRISTOPHER W.

Clemson University



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It took me years to process that cancer forever changed my life. By this, I mean the mental trauma caused by the diagnosis, not just the physical aspect. I tried to compartmentalize and laugh my pain away, but that solution was only temporary. Years of doing this led to a breaking point where I had to seek professional help. The long journey has changed how I interact with others, going from introspective and withdrawn to being more outspoken and caring.

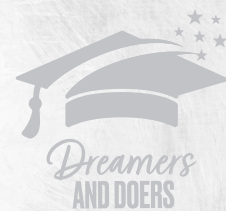
This change realigned my passions and goals and my ability to achieve them. My love for academics became revitalized after realizing what I wanted to do with my life. Through my struggles, I realized I could help others through their journeys regarding cancer and maladaptive thoughts. Because of my positive experience in group therapy, I have recommended to the Oncology center that maybe group therapy could be provided for others. My hope is to provide others with the type of help I needed and help give them the tools to make their lives more positive.





# COLLIN H.

University of Maryland, College Park



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Waking up in the middle of the night for tests, constantly being attached to an IV pole, and being bedridden, were just some of the things that became a part of my everyday life at the age of five. My days were spent under constant surveillance using vital monitoring equipment. I began to ponder how something such as a small clip on my finger was able to measure my oxygen saturation. Or how all my vitals could be easily accessed on a compact portable monitor. These machines that were so imperative to my survival became the spark to my interest in computer and information sciences.

Later, when my younger brother was diagnosed with leukemia, I witnessed the effects this had on my family once again—this time, from a different perspective. Utilizing my experiences from both a patient and caregiver, I believe that I have the passion and persistence necessary to progress the future of cancer treatments through a computer and information sciences pathway. A future where I can make the lives of children like my brother and I more manageable.





# COLTON K.

Wichita Technical Institute



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The doctors diagnosed me with Hodgkin's lymphoma back in 2018 when I was 21 years old, and it changed my life forever. It took me completely by surprise while also confirming my worst fears, as much of my close family has had cancer. I was scared that my life would never be the same, and sadly, I was not wrong, as everything quickly changed. The treatment was rough on me like it is for most. I tried to work but eventually lost my welding job as I couldn't keep up with its physical demands.

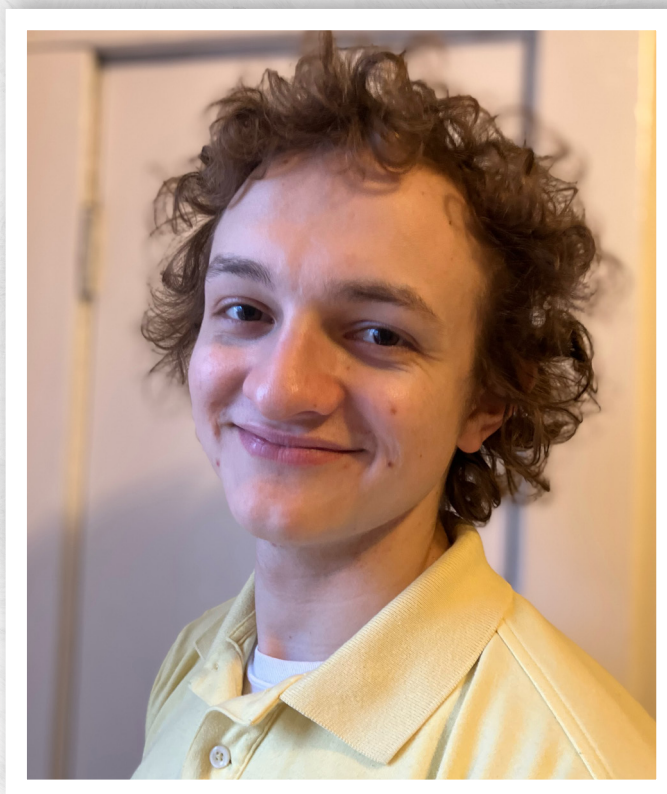
Everything was taken from me: I had lost friends, my job, and even my home for a time. I went through rounds of chemo as I bounced around from place to place, unable to afford rent. And, as a result, I was unable to be vigilant with my treatment. I realized that I could continue to focus on how difficult everything was or I could make this time count. So, I continued my education in a less physically demanding field and began to look for what would make me happy. As I continue forward, I plan to use my welding degree, mechanical drafting certificate, and HVAC to become a master contractor and start my own business.





# DANIEL H.

DePaul University



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

I was pursuing my degree at The Theatre School at DePaul University when I was diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL). When I was going through chemotherapy treatments, I started to feel sub-human at a certain point. My body became numb to the constant jabbing of needles, the blaring beeping of the IV machines, the humiliation of the butt swabs, and the feeling of loss as my hair fell out. My lymphoma diagnosis reinforced my goal of becoming an actor by teaching me about the vital importance of stories—humans have always strived to make meaning of hardships through telling stories. I passed the time watching ungodly amounts of TV. Those stories helped me retain my sanity during the darkest periods of chemotherapy.

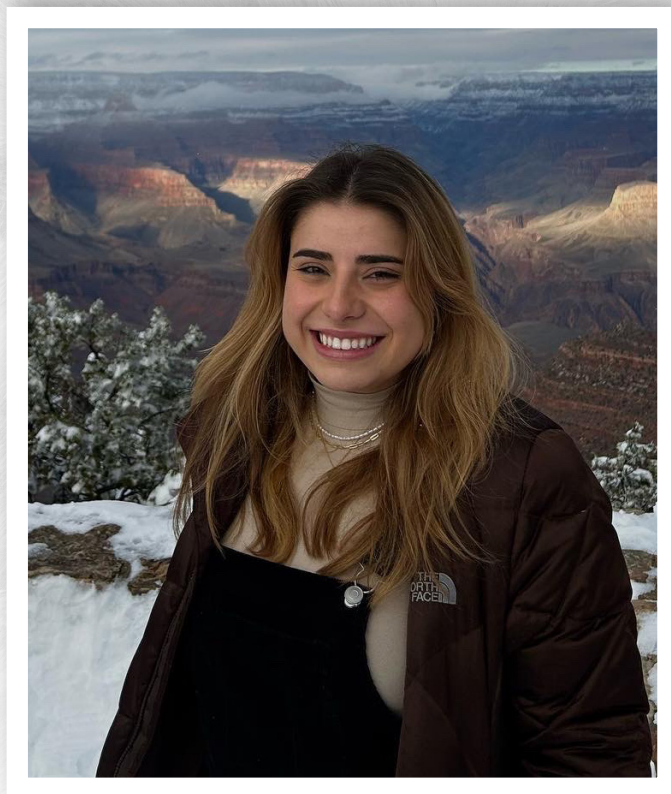
Cancer has already taken so much from me—it doesn't need to take my dreams away too. My hope is to help those affected by blood cancer by giving them the same thing acting has given me—a reminder that life is worth living and that there is happiness on the other side of difficult situations.





# DANIELA H.

University of Florida



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The day I finished chemotherapy, I was excited to return to school and finally feel “normal” again. The problem was I had changed: My body was weaker, and I was unable to keep up with my classmates in PE. My hair was still growing back, which caused severe insecurity. A year later, two of my friends, who were also pediatric cancer patients, passed away from the same disease I had somehow survived. I cried to my mom about the unfairness of it all.

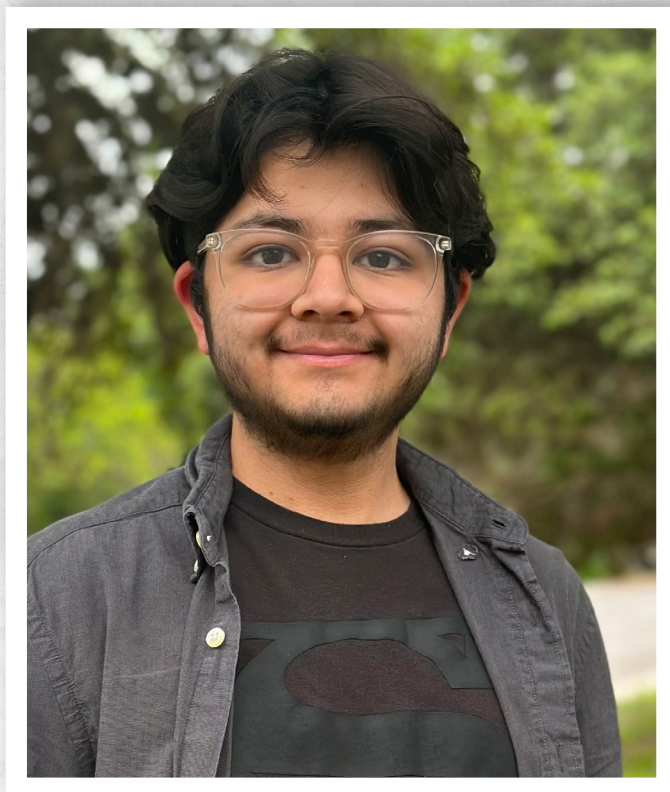
Years later, I saw how multifaceted the fight with cancer could be: On top of the pain of their child being sick with a lethal disease, families often struggle to pay the bills and to care for the rest of their family. I knew I wanted to choose a career that would allow me to study these problems and work to fix them. I am fascinated by how cultural and socioeconomic factors and political policy impact healthcare. I want to focus on survivorship, and what resources are available to help pediatric patients recover in all areas of their lives.





# DAVID F.

College Of HealthCare Professions



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I was diagnosed with leukemia twice, diagnosed with melanoma, and had a bone marrow transplant. After the first diagnosis, I had chemotherapy treatment for about 2 and a half years. Then I was in remission for 2 years until I relapsed with leukemia at the age of 4. The doctor informed us that the only way I was going to be kept alive was to go through radiation therapy and get a bone marrow transplant. And as a little kid, the treatment killed me but let me live. My height, learning abilities, health, and physical body were all affected, but I pushed through the hard times.

Because of my diagnosis, I mostly grew up living in the hospital, and it was like a second home for me. Knowing how everybody in the hospital was so welcoming and treated me with such kindness has shaped my goal of being part of that big family. I am currently aiming to become a medical assistant, to work in a hospital and with kids, because I've been in their shoes.





# ELIZABETH D.

Northern Kentucky University



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“Your cancer has returned.” After 13 years in remission, I never imagined that I would relapse. My world was turned upside down the moment I heard these four words. The curtain came down on the normal life of friends and school, and a new life of hospital visits and chemotherapy was unveiled.

This time, I realized that even though cancer was taking control over my body, its true bullying power was its ability to infiltrate my mind and emotions. I decided to reverse the roles and take my control back. I symbolized my courage and control over my disease with a razor. I was like a bull with its head down, ready to fight—and I was going to be bald and beautiful while doing it. My experience has allowed me to remind others that when life knocks you down, you have to get back up again and show it who’s the boss. I feel passionate about using my experience to help other kids dealing with tough diagnoses—to let them know that they are so much more than cancer.





**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors Award,  
in Memory of Alan M. Ayres**

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In the middle of my sophomore year in 2020, I was diagnosed with a form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. With a GPA of 4.0 and a spot on the varsity basketball team, my life as a normal teenager was interrupted by pokes, frequent doctor visits, physical changes in appearance, and missing out on so many events I love. As I was dealing with my cancer diagnosis, my school, activities, and friends buzzed around while I was stuck in place. While my friends were extremely supportive, none of them understood the type of loneliness that utterly consumed me.

Since becoming cancer free in January of 2022, I have had lots of time to reflect on my experiences. My support from my family, friends, and care team has been infinite. My passion is to educate and spread awareness of childhood cancer and help future cancer fighters not feel so alone. I yearn to follow in the footsteps of my inspiring nurses and give back to pediatric oncology patients fighting through exactly what I did. I refuse to let this interruption define me.





# EMILY B.

The Ohio State University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

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I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) when I was 4 years old. Ever since I was young, I chose to see the positives of what was happening to me, so that is the story I choose to tell. Being diagnosed with, or rather, defeating cancer gave me the strength and ambition to do anything I set my mind to. The way that I have decided to make my second chance matter is by pursuing what I am passionate about, excelling in what I do, and helping others along the way.

I am never afraid to speak up for what is right and to be sure that everyone around me feels like they matter. I plan to be a defense attorney to advocate for those who do not have a voice of their own before reaching my end goal: doing work with the Innocence Project. Sometimes life can get hard, classes are difficult, and I don't know how I could possibly do this, but in times like that I remember one thing: I have already been through something that many people cannot imagine, so there is nothing I cannot do.





**EMILY M.**

**Duquesne University**



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I was a junior in high school, trying to navigate the new normal after Covid-19, and just starting to get a grasp on this reality when I received a phone call informing me that my preliminary biopsy results showed Hodgkin lymphoma. Four days later, I was laying in a PET/CT scanner getting my first PET scan to stage my cancer. For the next three months, I underwent four rounds of chemotherapy, each three weeks long, and experienced many ups and downs. Looking back, cancer taught me how to stay positive, how to trust God, and that helping others is one of the most impactful things one person can do for another.

After having cancer, I hope that someday I can obtain an analyst job and join a crisis response team as a forensic specialist. I truly don't think that there is anything more humbling than helping those who have experienced the worst of the worst, and I would be honored to be able to help those who need it, especially in times of major crisis or natural disaster.





# ETHAN M.

Georgia College and State University



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Being diagnosed with ALL is just about the last thing you would expect at age 22, but throughout all the pain, stress, and uncertainty, I've gained a sense of purpose I will not forget. From the start, I knew I had a high-risk form of ALL that may not respond to traditional treatment. I was able to do CAR-T immediately after induction chemo, and the disease remained well under control the entire time. By the time I was infused with my cells there was barely any disease left at all. Now, I am doing well, have had no side effects from the CAR-T cells, and the results look promising.

I intend to get an internship doing laboratory work ideally with cells, and once I have my Masters, I'd like to become a CAR-T engineer or researcher myself. There is a long and promising road ahead. I just know that whatever twists and turns it may take, I must bring the same miracle to others that was brought to me.





# ETHAR A.

Providence College



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

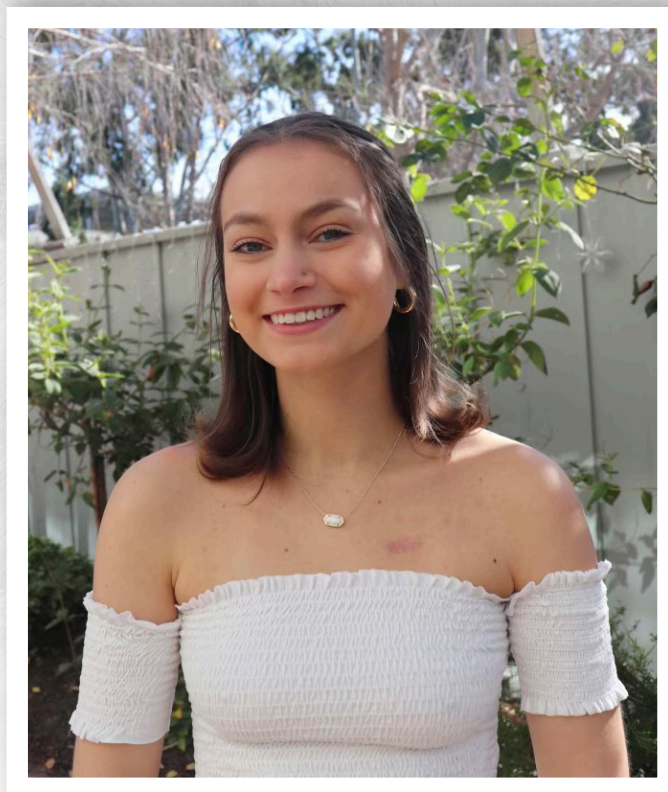
One year after I arrived in America as an eleven-year-old from Iraq, I was diagnosed with leukemia. I was devastated. I didn't know how to feel. Right after my diagnosis, I was immediately admitted to a local children's hospital where I had to stay for almost 40 days. It was a tough time in my life because I was still struggling with my English -- I couldn't speak or understand much of what was going on around me.

Finally, after 33 cycles of chemo, 8 spinal taps, 480 hospital visits, 10 hospital stays, over a month of radiation every day, and multiple ER visits, I was finally declared cancer-free. A year later, I lost two of my closest friends just months apart: Two of the only people who could truly understand me and my journey. Upon graduating high school, I decided to go to college, double majoring in Health Policy & Management and Global Studies. My goal when I graduate is to have a career in health policy making and work with the government on developing new laws regarding funding for pediatric cancer.



★ ★  
★ **FAITH J.**

**University of California, Santa Barbara**



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the ACE Family Foundation Award**

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If my diagnosis has taught me anything, it's that I took life for granted before I heard the devastating words "you have leukemia." When I was diagnosed with leukemia, I knew I had the opportunity to make a difference. It all started with an organization that provides grant money for childhood cancer research. I was teamed up with a young girl named Lexi. Lexi was a few years younger than me and in remission. We chatted and took pictures and she complimented my smile. Thrown, I thanked her. "Braces are incredibly expensive," she told me, adding that there is not much of a choice to be made when forced to choose between spending thousands of dollars on life saving chemotherapy or dental work.

As soon as I met Lexi, I knew there was something I could do. I am now pursuing a B.S. Degree in Biology with the intention of attending dental school and plan to specialize in orthodontics. It's my goal to give any pediatric cancer patient a beautiful smile whether they can afford it or not.





# GARY A.

University of Alabama in Huntsville



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Nearly ten years elapsed between my blood cancer diagnosis at six years old and my bone marrow transplant just before my seventeenth birthday. I can see now that my journey shaped my future.

As a young child, I was often guilty of breaking my toys to figure out how they worked. My fascination with technology grew over time to include Legos, electronics, and video games. When my many treatments over the years physically limited me, I often had enough strength to play with Legos. When I had a bone marrow transplant during a global pandemic, I was still able to connect with my friends through video games. When I couldn't participate in group activities, I helped individual people in my community by setting up various kinds of technology in their homes.

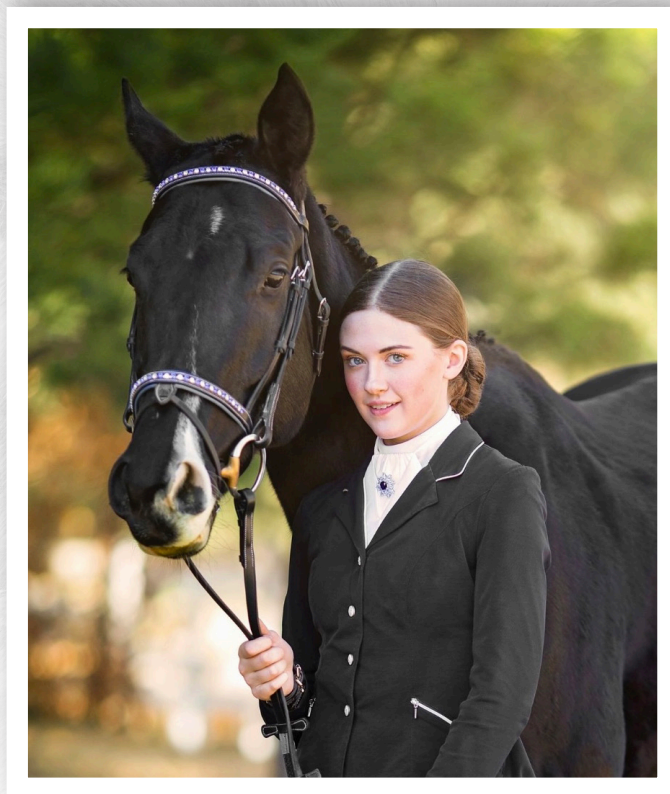
This has led me to my goal of studying to become an electrical engineer. I believe this to be the best of both worlds—combining my passion for building with my love of technology.





# GRACE D.

University of Colorado, Colorado Springs



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I was diagnosed with Pre-B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia six months after turning five. I had to advocate for myself at an incredibly young age, exposed to a medical world most adults never understand. But my diagnosis also did two important things: it brought horses into my life, and it opened my mind to serving in the medical field.

I received my favorite lesson horse, Cloudy, a few months after my diagnosis, and he kept me smiling through the darkest days of my chemotherapy. The perseverance and determination that I gained as a cancer patient pushed me to become the youngest volunteer at an equine rescue, where I eventually was promoted to assistant horse trainer and camp director.

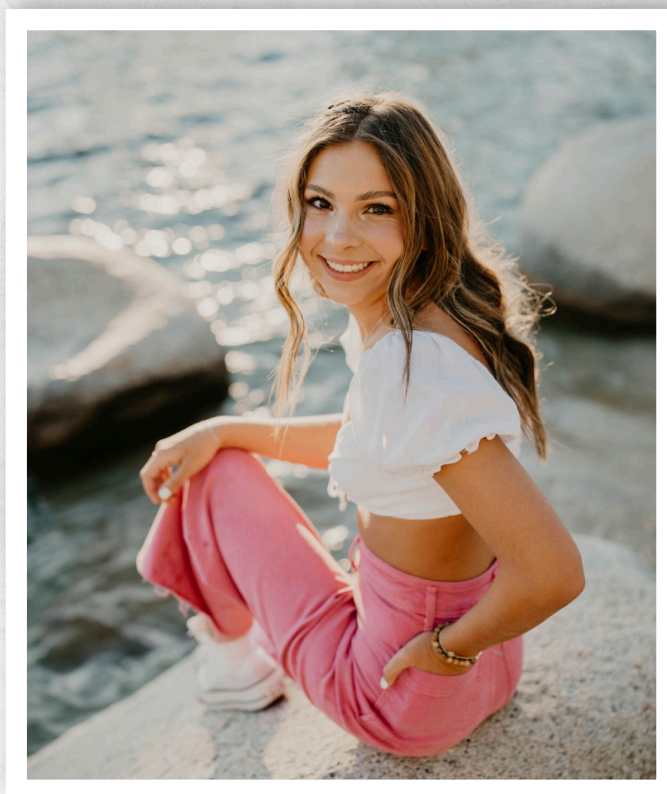
I am excited to pursue my bachelor's degree in biology, with an emphasis in pre-veterinary medicine, to give back and help animal patients of my own. My doctors and nurses in the hospital demonstrated the power of empathy and kindness, and I know that I will use their example as a guiding light.





# GRACIE G.

The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa



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Being diagnosed with leukemia was a complete shock. In the hospital during treatment, I always felt anxiety hanging over me: Were my blood counts high or low? Would chemo make me sick? Would I ever be a normal kid again?

Through my many procedures, my anesthesiologists were so great to me. One of them said something I will never forget: “You will be just fine, and we will fight this battle together.” My very first anesthesiologist had had the same experiences as me: His ability to comfort and connect with me is why I chose my career path. As a future nurse anesthetist, I want to be able to help people—especially children like I was—understand what they are going through and make them feel safe. This year, I am volunteering alongside nurses at my local hospital, which I feel has given me a head start toward that goal.

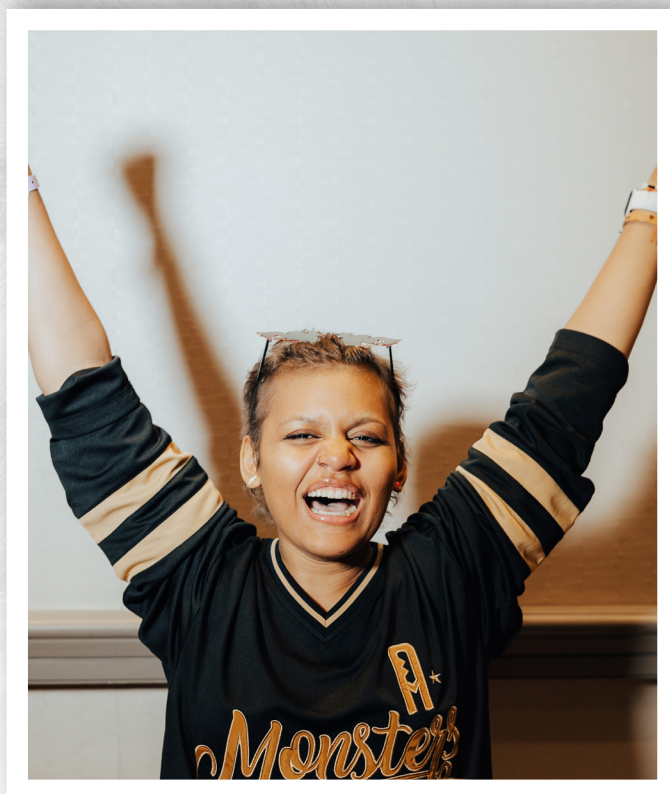
My great grandmother always taught me that when life becomes hard, you can become better or bitter. I want to choose to become better from my diagnosis.





# HALEY A.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

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Unfortunately, my experiences with cancer didn't start with me. My mother often told us stories of being diagnosed in the second grade. Then, in 2017, my little sister was diagnosed with leukemia. We got through it, and I thought that would be the end of the story.

The day I was diagnosed with leukemia, I remember my doctor telling me to "put everything on pause." For me, that meant pausing my senior year of high school, my fourteenth year of dance, and the start of college. But I'm ready for a change.

My choice to major in psychology is one of the few things in my life untainted by cancer. It's a fascinating field that's nuanced and constantly changing. I want to positively impact others, just like so many helped me through my hard times. This scholarship will go towards more than an education: it will help fulfill my promise to give back.

I'm not letting leukemia pause my life for any more than it already has. I'm ready to move forward.





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College is supposed to be a time of hope for one's future. My cancer diagnosis in my freshman year challenged those notions: I went from being totally independent to having a full-time caregiver. Cancer forces your hand; it makes you delve deep and find purpose.

Although I missed an academic year, I'm blessed to say I'm back at college, living on campus while undergoing maintenance treatment. My original law school aspirations have changed; I'm now devoting my energy to becoming a history professor. In the classroom, I can be a positive influence on young people searching for identity and meaning. Through the lens of my own hardships, I can act as a guiding figure for those in need. I am also actively participating in numerous organizations, including MUMiracle, which focuses on fundraising and hosting events to support kids and families affected by childhood cancer.

Life throws things at us that we aren't ready for, but these challenges foster an appreciation for all the good life has to offer. I have found my "good" in others.





# ISABELLA T.

Northwestern University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

I perfected the art of the bucket hat while unexpectedly becoming bald as a teenage girl. Near the end of my junior year, I was diagnosed with stage II Hodgkin lymphoma. My hair—golden locks that made my mother tell me I looked like “the sun itself”— had always been a source of pride. When it began to fall out during chemotherapy, I felt like I was losing a part of myself. Among the many head covering options, one solution seemed clear: the bucket hat.

I soon developed my own collection, inducting only the loudest, most absurd patterns: bananas, cow prints, even cartoon geese. Strangers in the street would laugh and compliment my hats, and they made my nurses and fellow patients at the hospital smile. In these moments, I forgot about my disease, if only briefly.

In addition to embracing a positive outlook, I gained academic direction. My eyes were opened to the vast realm of medical technologies—specifically the use of artificial intelligence. I hope to focus my college career on investigating predictive analytics, specifically to improve cancer treatments through the integration of science and mathematics.





# ISABELLE JANE F.

Brigham Young University



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As a five-year-old hooked up to countless machines and IVs, I could never have known that my three year-long battle against leukemia would teach me resilience. At that age, I was unaware of the impermanence of life—that on any given day, I could lose it all. Cancer helped me realize that every day is a precious gift.

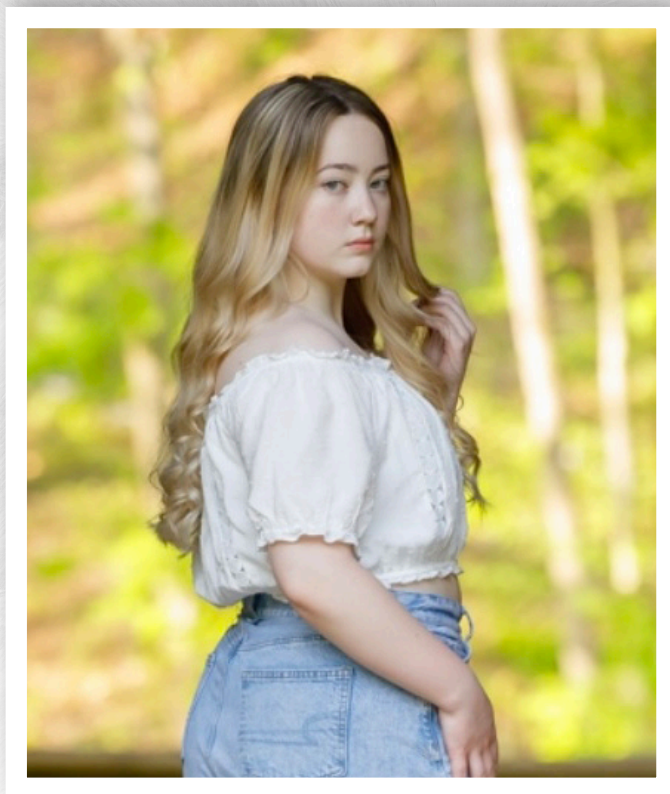
Thanks to my incredible doctors, nurses, and caregivers, I was given a second chance. Since reaching remission, I've developed a similar passion for helping people when they need it most. To gain the skills I need to help save lives, I've immersed myself in the medical field. After high school, I trained as a phlebotomist and worked for the American Red Cross. That was a very special experience, because blood and platelet transfusions were crucial during my treatment.

At BYU, I've shifted my focus to emergency medicine, where a split-second decision can save someone. Life is a gift, one that everyone should have the opportunity to experience fully. As a childhood leukemia survivor, I have the ability to help others survive and thrive.



# IZABELLA W.

PennWest Edinboro University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

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At twelve years old, I was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia—a rare type in children. After various procedures and four blood transfusions, I pulled through in only a week of treatment, but I still take oral chemotherapy daily. This lifelong journey I am on may not be my fault, but it is my purpose.

Thanks to my wonderful teams of oncology nurses and doctors, I have realized my main goal is to help people however I can. My experience with suffering has given me a deeper understanding of life; I feel I can help people cope with and adjust to the challenges they face. I want to help them find their own purpose—like my nurses and doctors have done for me.

I am attending a four-year BSN program. After I complete it, I hope to obtain a position in a healthcare facility where I can help people start families. Nothing is better or more important in the world than human life. Whatever I do, I will make sure I have the most positive impact I can on others.





# JACK P.

University of Colorado, Colorado Springs



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Elbit Systems of America Award

Cancer is a wrecking ball to one's life. In junior year of high school, I was diagnosed with leukemia. My diagnosis made me reassess what I found meaningful: I'd been planning to study business in college, but during treatment, I started researching schools to study my true passion—criminal justice.

I decided to go to UCCS, and to say I did well was an understatement. I loved my classes and made the dean's list. At the end of freshman year, I rang the bell at Children's Hospital: I had reached remission. But one of cancer's countless lessons is that nothing goes as planned. In the spring of sophomore year, I was struggling to walk. An MRI revealed leukemia cells pushing on my nerves: a central nervous system relapse. I unfortunately had to give up an internship with the District Attorney.

There is good news: I found out I qualified for CAR T-cell treatment, which could kill the cancer cells for good. I know I will survive cancer again. When I do, I look forward to getting my degree so I can truly give back to my community.





# JAIDYN W.

The University of Missouri - Columbia



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

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At my preschool graduation, I announced to the audience that I wanted to grow up to be a nurse. It wasn't until five years later, after my diagnosis of nodular sclerosing Hodgkin lymphoma, that I learned what being a nurse truly meant.

I had just started at a new school; knowing I'd be absent from sports, sleepovers, and more was terrifying. Then I met Nurse Sherry. She would distract me with baseball talk while accessing my port; she was always there with a cool rag or blanket during my chemotherapy. It was her genuine care that led me to my nursing path.

My studies have focused on STEM courses, volunteering, and interning at clinics. In my oncology internship, a spry eighty-year-old woman being treated for stomach cancer became my favorite patient. I realized she was lonely, and that this age group needs more than medical treatment—they need emotional support. They need a Sherry. This is why my passion has shifted from pediatrics to geriatrics. Cancer is an unforgiving disease, but I truly cannot wait to use the second chance that I have been given to help others.





# JAMES P.

University of South Carolina



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

I believe that cancer survivors live two lives: one before diagnosis and one after. Before my leukemia diagnosis at sixteen years old, I had little interest in healthcare. During my six months of treatment, my nurses joked I was learning more than first-year medical students, but it wasn't until I started college after remission that my interests truly changed.

I was accepted to USC as a Political Science major, planning to attend law school and become an attorney. Barely two weeks into freshman year, I realized I had made a huge mistake. I was sitting in history class, learning minute details about a centuries-old war, but all I could think about was the kids spending their time in an oncology ward, like I had. Now, the only thing that mattered to me was helping those kids.

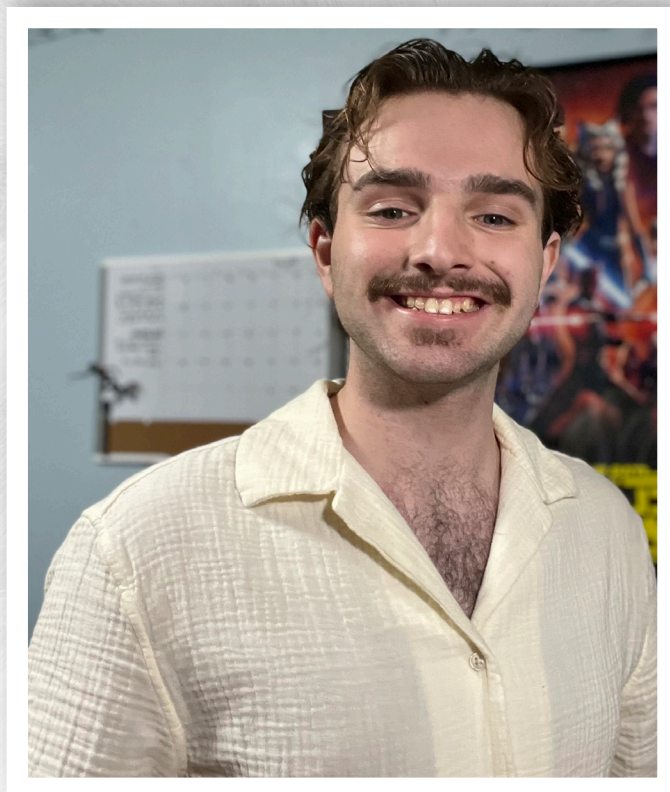
I decided to become a pediatric oncology nurse. I switched into USC's Public Health school, hoping to attend an accelerated nursing program after graduation. No matter how far past my own battle I am, childhood cancer is important enough to me to make it my life's calling.





# JAMES S.

Stephen F. Austin State University



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At four years old, I was diagnosed with leukemia. Having a port in my chest, losing my hair, and being hooked up to a machine isn't something any four-year-old should experience. But in thirteen years in remission, I've been on quite the journey.

I've been blessed with the greatest friends, as well as an amazing and talented family. My parents were both musicians in the US Air Force Band, and both went on to teach music—my mom is in her tenth year, and my dad retired after twenty years. In turn, I am working on my art education degree to give back to society, as well as use my gifts to help others who are fighting cancer.

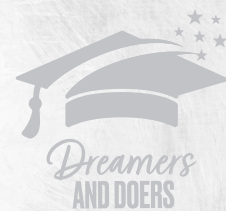
I'm only nineteen, and I don't expect to have it all figured out—I feel like I'm still figuring out the microwave. But I want my survivorship to be a testimonial of hope to those experiencing what I did. I am so grateful to be living a normal, healthy life and enjoying my college career. I am excited about gaining all the skills and experience I can, and to help inspire those around me to do the same.





# JESSICA V.

University of Mississippi



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

Everyone has at least one defining moment of their lives that gives them new perspective—and maybe points them in a new direction. For me, this moment was at age twelve, when I heard three words: “You have cancer.”

I spent the next six months fighting acute myeloid leukemia. I was only allowed six visitors in the hospital, so I was cut off from the world. I had no control over what was going on in my body. But after months of chemotherapy, I officially became a cancer survivor.

I’ve always had a dream of changing the world; now that dream has gained focus. My caregivers were shining lights in my time of darkness, and I want to provide the same hope that they did for me. I aim to become an occupational therapist, providing active care to pediatric cancer patients and being a part of their journeys.

Thanks to my team, my life was saved. I want to work passionately and live vivaciously, without wasting this second chance at life. I want to see a world after cancer.





# JULIA R.

Florida State University



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To my past self: After a blood exam and a ten-minute phone call, your life changes forever. You're diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia. You sit in a room where strangers probe you with needles and tubes. You cannot plan for tomorrow because you're not sure it will come. But you are incredibly resilient, stronger than the sickness. You now admire your scars, reminders of your endurance.

As I write to you, I have found that I possess a gift: the ability to remain exceptionally optimistic. I've also found a way to bring hope into the lives of others: by becoming a physician. I am back at college, working toward that goal and with organizations that let me help cancer patients. This lets me validate others' journeys and witness steps toward a cure I'll use one day. I want to treat both patients' bodies and their souls; I want to be the sun, bringing light, warmth, and hope.

And to my future self, the dedicated medical worker who uses her whole heart to help people: I cannot wait to see what we'll accomplish.





# JULIANNA W.

Bridge Valley Community and Technical College



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In March 2020, I found out I had acute lymphoblastic leukemia—ten days into a global pandemic. I was often away from my family, including my dogs Louie and Emma and my four cats—all of whom had stayed close to me in the weeks before my diagnosis, clearly aware something was wrong.

When my treatment moved to a different hospital, I was sad to be so far away from home. The one thing that helped was the hospital's therapy dogs. They showed me animals can be more than just pets; they can be sources of comfort, strength, and unconditional love. I would go on to have two relapses and three remissions over two-plus years: Through this journey, I've learned that the love of animals can carry you through your worst times.

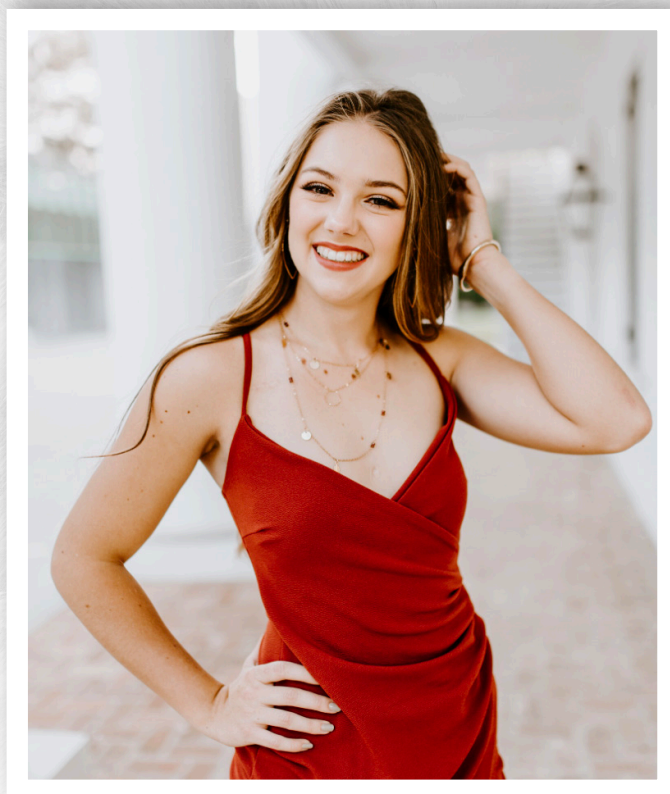
The love and support my own pets and the hospital's animals showed me reinforced my decision to pursue a career that allows me to love and care for animals, as my medical team did for me. I plan to get a degree in animal sciences.





# KACIE F.

Louisiana State University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

Tile floors. Antiseptic smells. Saline drips. As a childhood survivor of acute lymphoblastic leukemia, these are my earliest memories. After two and a half years of treatment and two more of tests, my family celebrated my remission. But only two months after that, I relapsed. I was thrown back into the world of hospitals and medications, forced to admit cancer was my normal. At nine, I was older this time, and understood what could happen to me. But after two more years of intense chemo, I celebrated another remission.

Since my second diagnosis, I've known I want to become a doctor and research cancer cures. To make a difference in the meantime, I began volunteering with cancer organizations. In my second year of college, I'm continuing to work with a research lab: Our latest project, exploring breast cancer treatment, has great potential.

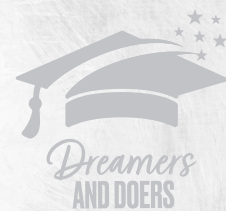
When people find out that I had cancer twice as a child, they apologize, but I consider it a blessing. Having cancer stoked my passion to help those in need. I can't change the past, but I can use my experiences to make a better future.





# KATHERINE I.

Rice University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

In the 1960s, a researcher named Emil J. Freireich, MD developed early intensification, a strategy to treat childhood leukemia. He helped save my life. At three years old, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia—but after two and a half years of chemotherapy, I became a long-term cancer survivor. I am grateful for researchers like Dr. Freireich, and he's part of the reason I want to become a biomedical researcher to help others survive cancer.

In high school, I took courses in physiology and medical microbiology, and interned at my local hospital. I fell in love with the idea of a career in the medical field, and decided to major in bioengineering to learn how to innovate and shape the future of medicine.

Dr. Freireich once said, "Cancer will always be around, but every day we're curing more and more patients who live a long time and do great things after their disease." I want to continue to do great things as a survivor—including helping others fight cancer.





# KIM-MAIL

The Ohio State University



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

Growing up, my family didn't take my artistic passions seriously. So, when I reached college, I chose a stable and lucrative field: computer science. In my sophomore year, after weeks of back and chest pain, I was rushed to emergency heart surgery and diagnosed with stage IV lymphoma.

In the hospital, I realized so much was missing from my life. I was so busy being the "perfect" college student that I made no time for myself, friends, or family. I couldn't make any big changes in treatment, but I could do one thing: draw. Over five months of chemotherapy, I drew every day: sometimes silly doodles, sometimes dark pieces about coping with my sickness.

When I was declared in remission, I went back to my old job, reconnected with friends and, most importantly, added an art major to my degree. Having cancer makes you feel alone and out of control of your own body. I want to make art that makes other survivors feel understood and seen. I want to make art that changes the world.





# LANDON T.

American Career Training



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At six years old, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. As transfusions and chemotherapy became my norm, I made friends in the same boat—including Tyler. I have many memories of us: playing video games in the hospital, but also tramping through amusement parks and laughing. Neither of us navigated our journeys alone.

When I was almost ten years old, my blood counts came back normal, but Tyler had taken a turn for the worse. His doctors suggested a bone marrow transplant: a journey he would take without me. The transplant was a failure, and his mother gave me his special blanket, which I still have to this day.

If I could take one lesson from leukemia, it would be that your journey includes those who walk with you along the way. That's why I give back whenever I can: food drives, serving food at local missions, and more. Currently I am interested in becoming an electrical line worker to work on natural disasters and rebuild communities that have been damaged.





# LANGLEY E.

Florida Gulf Coast University



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Days before I started seventh grade, the removal of a swollen lymph node revealed my diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma. Although I completed chemotherapy before the end of the school year, I couldn't return to in-person classes. This point drastically affected the rest of my academic career.

Before my diagnosis, I was an honors student but doing the bare minimum to pass, with few extracurriculars. But having cancer was a morbid wake-up call: my life could be radically interrupted at any moment, so I needed to be proactive to ensure my success. I started tackling extra credit projects, tutoring in math, and volunteering with cancer organizations.

Going forward into higher education, I strive to make the most of my life and claim every chance presented to me. I want to accomplish something that positively affects my community and give back to the organizations that supported me—so future patients can have even better lives than I did.





**LEIA B.**

**Simmons University**



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Before my diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma, I had plans for my future: I would graduate on time and then go to law school. But after, I had to leave university to go home for treatment. I lost fifteen credits that semester, but gained a passion for speaking up for students who were disenfranchised or part of a minority. Though I was away from campus, I solidified this mission by bringing an NAACP chapter to my university virtually, as well as becoming a vocal advocate for disabled students.

My diagnosis also recultivated my love for the medical field: I renewed my phlebotomy license, as I want to have a way to help when duty calls. Without the love and care of my nurses, recovery from my stem cell transplant would have been much harder. To help others the way I have been helped along my journey is fulfilling.

Education helps me help others and learn about their experiences. I am excited to continue my own college career so I can continue to prioritize learning and service to my community.



★ ★  
★ **LILY D.**

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater



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In second grade, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), and my life became anything but typical. For two years of treatment, I longed to leave my hospital bed and ride my bike around the block. Then, six months from ringing the bell for the end of my treatment, my parents noticed symptoms in my twin sister. Our worst nightmare came true: she also had ALL. Life came to an abrupt halt once again.

During the five years my sister and I were in treatment, my family's relationships were tested. A motto coined during our journey was "take every day moment by moment"; we had to be adaptable. My attendance in school was irregular and plans often changed due to emergency room visits. While my major may similarly change, my goal in pursuing a college education is to work a job I enjoy while making a difference. Without true passion, life can become meaningless. My goal as a leader is to help others improve by modeling change.





# LINDSAY T.

The George Washington University



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At three years old, I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. For the next six months, the ninth floor of Brenner Children’s Hospital was my home. I trick-or-treated at the nurses’ station; we celebrated my mom’s birthday in my hospital room. After 153 nights in the hospital, my hair all falling out, and countless Cars rewatches, I reached remission. But that doesn’t mean my journey is over; being a cancer survival is an integral part of me.

Growing up, I already wanted to help other kids fight cancer, as I’d seen its emotional and financial effects on my family. I joined fundraising events and started volunteering with cancer organizations, solidifying my desire to work in healthcare. I finally settled on my goal: to be a pediatric emergency room physician. I am well-suited to a high-intensity environment and want to stay objective while providing the best care. I am working to earn my EMT certification and plan to continue my cancer advocacy, including healthcare affordability and access. I want to make a positive impact on other families—and that change far outweighs the challenges my family faced.





# LUC M.

Kennesaw State University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors Award, the Elbit Systems of America Award

In the moment I was diagnosed with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia, it felt like I had frozen while the world around me kept going. I faced many hurdles during treatment, from bone pain so bad I needed morphine to taking a physics exam from my hospital bed. But even on days when I didn't want to leave bed, I would walk around and see babies in cribs facing the same battle as me. It made me decide to work in the medical field, because no child should deal with what I did, and no parent should worry like mine did.

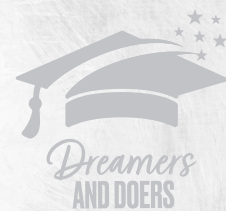
I want to study neuroscience, focusing on the effects of chemotherapy on the brain—including brain fog, which I've experienced firsthand. Through my studies, I hope to find ways to lessen these effects on cancer patients. Today, I'm in remission and hope to join the community that has helped save me—and hopefully inspire other cancer survivors in the process.





# LUCA C.

Houston Community College



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I was diagnosed with T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia at the age of two. My treatment included chemotherapy and full body radiation; as a result, I missed a lot of school and had to work hard to catch up. Through it all, I always maintained a positive attitude; learning to find humor in situations has helped me cope and thrive.

Currently, I hope to earn an engineering degree. Both my parents are engineers working at NASA, and often told stories from their careers. I think my interest in engineering also sprung from my early days in the hospital, where I received my first LEGO set. My dad and I worked together to build them until eventually, I learned to build them on my own. I would love to be part of an engineering team that advances clean energy solutions.

Through every challenge I have faced, I am constantly reminded that life is a gift. There are no guarantees for tomorrow, so I make the most of the moments I have. I want to keep creating and building.





**LYDIA M.**

**Southern Maine Community College**



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

I always had treatment on Thursdays. I was excused from school to drive two hours south to be pumped full of drugs, stuck with needles, stuck with needles again because the first time didn't work, and feel terrible.

I also always had my Girl Scout meetings on Thursdays. More often than not, I would show up in PJs with a puke bag tucked in my sweatshirt pocket "just in case." I got to catch up with my friends, and also take risks, invent new ways to approach things, and lead my troop in badge activities and discussions.

It would be easy to say I hated Thursdays, but they were also my favorite day of the week. On Thursdays I found myself. Some of the hardest days of my life were Thursdays, but so were some of the best.

Now that I'm cancer free, I'm confident I know who I am and what I stand for, and I still put on my vest every week for Girl Scout meetings (on Thursdays, of course). I know my calling is to help others—and I'll do that through radiography.





**LYDIA M.**

**Framingham State University**



**LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors,  
the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

If you had told me a decade ago that I would be heading off to college, I wouldn't have believed you. That's because at age four, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. At my sickest, I was being pushed in a wheelchair and couldn't eat consistently. Now, I'm an avid weightlifter, runner, and skier. My diagnosis helped me appreciate the ability to move my body, and this is why I'm planning on studying either kinesiology or nutrition.

One of my favorite things to do is lift weights, thanks to a close family friend, Luc. He encouraged me to try the gym for the first time in December 2020, and I've never looked back. After fighting a stage four brain tumor for almost a year, Luc passed away in March of 2022. My memories of his impeccable strength have pushed me harder toward my goals than anything else.

Since my experience with cancer, I've wanted to help people. I cannot wait to start my education, and I will work as hard as I can to better the lives of others in the way that others have impacted me.





# MACKENZIE Z.

Academy Of Salon And Spa



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At seventeen, I was diagnosed with Ph-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia and had to miss my entire junior year of high school. I had side effects from almost every kind of chemotherapy; I was in the hospital more than I was at home. Six months after treatment, the cancer came back. It was harder the second time: I was far away from my loved ones and was told getting back to remission was next to impossible. But I made it—I've been cancer-free for three years.

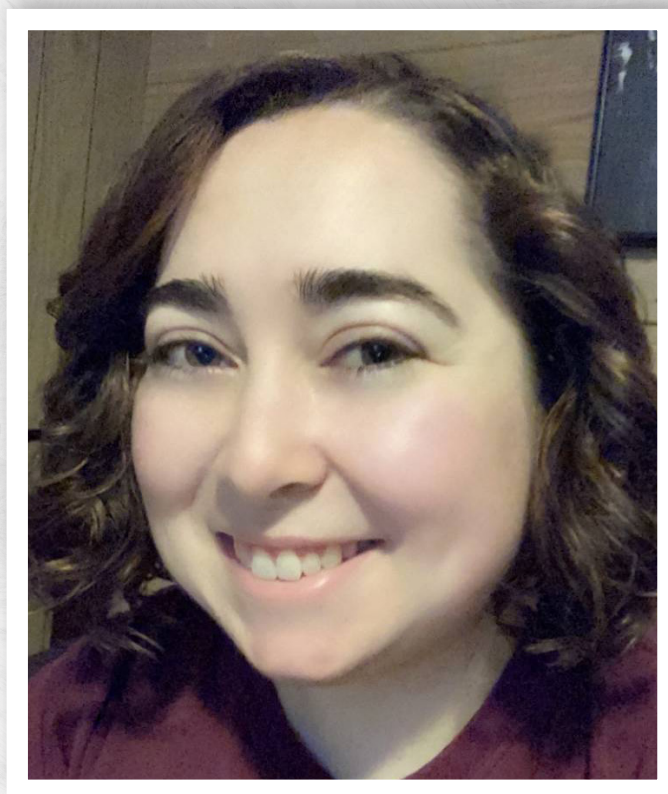
I can't express how much both of my medical teams helped me. This is partially why I want to study cosmetology—to give back and support kids with cancer. I used to compete in beauty pageants as a kid, but had to stop because of my diagnosis. With my cosmetology diploma, I want to be able to do fun things with cancer patients' hair when it grows back, the way I did with mine. I want to show kids and women that even without hair, you can do anything.





# MADELEINE S.

University of Maryland, College Park



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In April 2015, life was just starting to make sense: I had my first full-time job and had plans to resume my studies. But one morning, I came across a lump on the side of my neck. Not long after, I received a devastating phone call: I had cancer. I had to put my plans on hold and focus. Six months of treatment turned into three years, and I was given five years to live. But I did everything I could to survive, and my final treatment saved my life.

The day I was discharged from the hospital, I enrolled in classes at my local community college. During my cancer journey, I discovered my passions: While in chemo, I would read about European and U.S. history. As a dual French citizen, I found the ties between the two fascinating. I chose to study history because without the promotion of scientific studies through political movements, I wouldn't be here today. I hope to use a background in history to teach others about the world's past mistakes, and hopefully to prevent them from being repeated in the future.





# MADISON C.

University of Florida



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As a four-year-old, I had no idea what “acute lymphoblastic leukemia” meant. For the next three years, my best friends became IV poles and fatigue was my biggest enemy. But despite cancer’s bitter hostility, I faced it with a smile, and immediate surgery and chemotherapy saved my life.

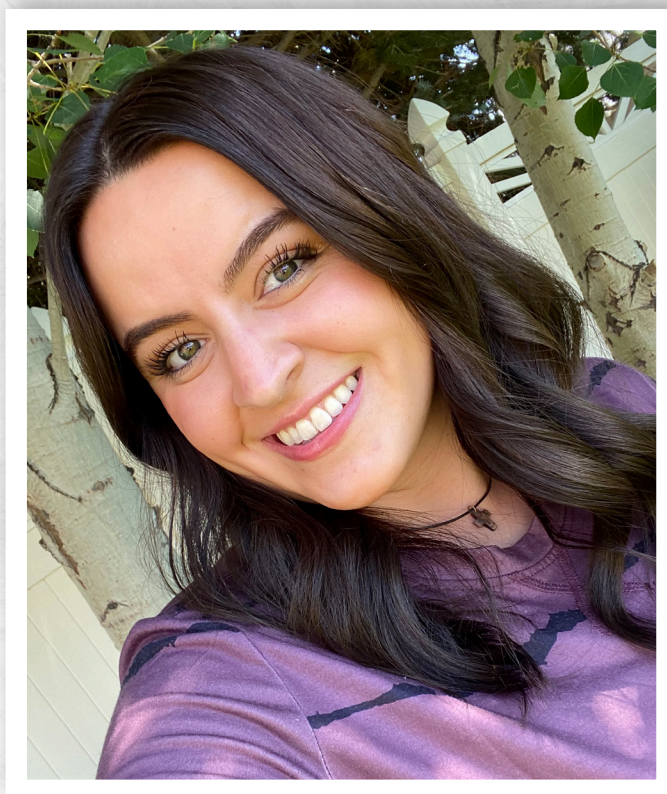
As a survivor, I felt compelled to volunteer for the Children's Cancer Center, where I provided educational support and mentorship to kids experiencing what I did. Teaching these kids what they’re capable of, rather than what they’re limited to, reminded me of the massive impact my doctors and nurses had on me. That’s why I hope to study biological sciences to achieve my dream of becoming a pediatric oncologist. Survivorship means never forgetting, forever being grateful, and giving back to those in need. I believe my perspective as a survivor will bring compassion, inspiration, and motivation to my future patients.





# MARIAH M.

Western Wyoming Community College



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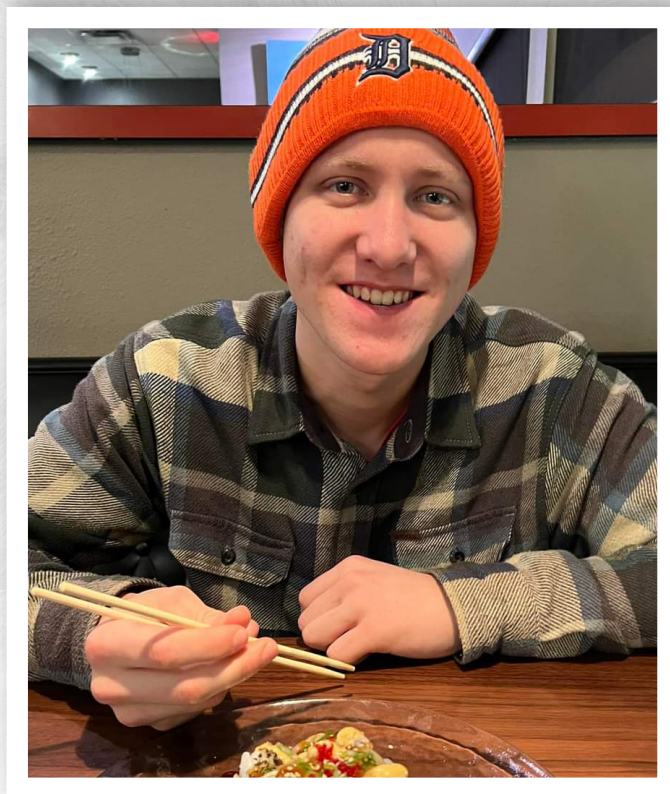
I have always known that I wanted a life of creativity and purpose. But when cancer enters your life, a dream can get lost. My mother passed away from adrenal cortical carcinoma when I was fourteen. Losing her forced me to grow up fast. Art was the one thing I had; a world I could escape into over the years.

A year into my college studies, the unthinkable happened: I was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia. My treatment schedule forced me to drop my art classes. But after a few years of treatment, I am finally on the rise. After stumbling across a local art studio, I was inspired to pick up the brush again, and now I am finishing a mural at that very studio!

Art has healed me in indescribable ways and given me direction. I would love to lead an art program for individuals who are disabled or impacted by cancer. The idea of sharing this therapeutic medium with those who share my experiences brings me excitement I haven't felt since before I heard the word "cancer."



★ ★  
★ **MARTIN V.**  
ATP Flight School



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After getting diagnosed with stage 3 Hodgkin lymphoma, I was afraid—like anyone would be. My friends and family stayed close through my treatment, and I tried to stay strong and positive for them. As the third of six kids, I wanted to show my younger siblings that nothing is impossible.

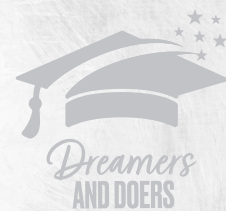
Since my first time on a plane, my dream has been to become a pilot. I've always wanted to experience extraordinary things, become the best at what I do, and use my skills to help others. After having had cancer, I've realized how short life is, and that I'm ready to take on anything. While I may not save lives as a pilot, I know my job will make other people's lives easier, which is all I can ask for. I will be moving away from my family for flight school—a big step. But because of the hardships I've already faced, I feel more ready than ever.





# MATTHEW T.

Texas A&M University



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In 2020, at fourteen, I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. My dad told me, “We are going to beat this and walk out of this place together.” In a six-month hospital stay, I endured five rounds of chemotherapy, three ICU trips, and dozens of surgeries. But there were bright spots: I consider myself lucky that I didn’t lose a year of school, and I learned that I am loved. My dad was always by my side, and I was overwhelmed with well-wishers from school, my Boy Scout troop, and my hockey team.

After treatment, I returned home with a new zest for life. I wondered: what decisions could I make for my future that would allow me to help other people? After observing my dedicated doctors and nurses firsthand, my goal was clear: I would pursue a career in medicine.

The road to recovery is long, and I still walk that road today. But I believe fear won’t control you if you don’t let it. I can’t imagine anything in my future being as difficult as cancer, and I am confident I can overcome any obstacle.





# MICHAEL D.

Pennsylvania State University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

In 2021, 61,090 Americans were diagnosed with Leukemia. I was one of them. In December, I began intensive chemotherapy.

I was attending The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) when I was diagnosed. I hoped to use my love for math and science as a nuclear engineer in the U.S. Navy, so at the time, I was a Midshipman of the Navy ROTC (NROTC) program. Being from Annapolis, I had been surrounded by military personnel my whole life and wanted to be one of them.

My diagnosis put that goal on hold as I was forced to leave school—including NROTC and participation in THON—to receive chemotherapy. But in the fall of 2022, my first semester back, I jumped right back in with a new contribution: experience. I could now offer insight on cancer, its diagnosis, and its treatment for my THON team and others.

In high school, I was involved in LLS's Student Visionaries of the Year and I joined THON in college. I plan to continue participating in fundraising activities like these because I can offer a unique perspective as a survivor.





# MOLLY B.

Aveda Frederic's Institute - Cincinnati



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On December 4th, 2019, I asked my mom for money to get a tattoo. I wanted a dragonfly to represent family. Once it was finished, my mom said, “I didn’t think you were going to go through with it.” I have always wanted to get one despite the fear and pain I might endure. Who knew that single tattoo would show me that I can also conquer cancer.

I am a 19-year-old who was diagnosed with grade 2, stage 3 follicular lymphoma in 2022. My lymphoma is incurable; therefore my remission will always be temporary. Something like this can cause you to question what it is you want from life—who you truly want to be. For me, that’s someone like my mother.

I have been grieving over the loss of my health and the person I was. I have experienced feelings of denial, anger, depression, and fear. But I have also experienced much love, support, and kindness. I’ve learned that I am most fulfilled while helping others, so my goal is to provide a bit of luxury to other young adults who are suffering.



★ ★  
★ **MOLLY F.**

The Catholic University of America



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As a cancer survivor, I have had no choice but to use the obstacles thrown my way to pave the path to my future. Despite being just four years old when I was diagnosed with stage 4 lymphoma, my experiences profoundly shaped me into who I am today.

While many of the details surrounding my diagnosis and treatment are fuzzy, others remain crystal clear. The stomach pain that made it impossible to sit still, how alone I felt in the chemo infusion chair, the sound of my mother's footsteps as she rolled my IV, and the tenderness of "Pup," my favorite nurse.

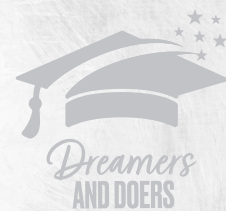
A second chance is never a guarantee and mine has filled me with a deep commitment to give back to the community that bolstered me during my illness. Even after fifteen years, I still feel admiration for Pup. Not only does he embody the type of nurse I want to be, my time under his care guides how I interact with the world. Indeed, the greatest hardship I can imagine shaped me into the person I am today and inspired the person I want to become.





# MORGAN L.

Kent State University



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February 14, 2018: the day that changed my life forever. The day I was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma. Up until then, I was a normal 12-year-old.

Over the next three years, I faced multiple chemo regimens, radiation, an auto stem cell transplant, and an allo stem cell transplant. Instead of going to school and learning textbook lessons, I was in the hospital learning real life lessons. And while I missed out on years of school, I triumphed over cancer, even after two relapses.

Although it was challenging, I continued to participate in the sports I loved. I mentored my teammates and was selected to participate in the Wellington Student Leadership team in which I mentored younger students and helped plan functions for the high school and community.

Now, I plan to pursue a nursing degree. Although I would have never chosen to get cancer, there were blessings that came out of it. I met some of the most compassionate individuals. I felt supported, that my voice mattered, and loved. I know that I want to be able to provide that same care for others.



★ ★  
★ **MYLES M.**  
Undecided



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I've always known that I wanted a career in sports. My dream since I was in third grade has been to become a professional football player, but as I grew older, I started to think about Sports Medicine and physical therapy.

On December 4th, 2021, I was diagnosed with T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Here I was, in what seemed like a blink of an eye, fighting for my life. I was a 17-year-old, junior in high school, and athlete. I had several serious hospital admissions, and some days, we did not know what the next would hold. Currently I am in remission.

Because my family and I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others, we started Mission 6Strong—the 6Strong referencing a tribute from my teammates when I was ill—in which we raise funds for other families in my clinic. I want to lead by example to show that no matter what your circumstances are, it does not define you. I hope to live this life not as someone who has/had cancer, but as someone who used it to make the best possible version of myself.





# NATALEIGH H.

Ohio Northern University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Tour De Court Award

I was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia at 16 months old. I don't recall much of my treatment, but my experience has been relayed to me through stories, pictures, and a printed-out treatment plan. While other kids were in daycare, my sister and I were in the infusion room playing with dolls that had the same bandages and scars as me. I was given unconditional support, and I can't help but believe that this helped to shape the confident person I am today.

Because of my diagnosis, I grew up attending events supporting The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. In 2013, I was asked to be the inaugural Northwest Ohio Girl of the Year, and now I am a candidate in the 2023 Student Visionary of the Year campaign. I hope to be the first person to earn all three titles: Girl of the Year, Student Visionary of the Year, and Visionary of the Year.

From here, I plan on majoring in Political Science on a pre-law track, and will advocate for pediatric cancer patients so that they can experience the same positive outcome I was fortunate to have.





# NATALIE B.

The University of Oklahoma



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I stared up at the dozens of pink balloons that slowly drifted into the sky, back to the adults dressed in black, and the small coffin waiting to be lowered into the ground.

I had only gotten to meet Alexa a few times, and it was hard to play because we were both sick. I knew hers was different from mine though. She had a cancer called neuroblastoma (in her brain) and I had leukemia (in my blood). I might have only been three, but I knew what cancer was. I knew what pain was. But I didn't know what death was. Not until that beautiful, sad, June day.

Six months after Alexa passed, we threw an end-of-chemo party for me. Now, I am 13 years into remission.

Once I entered high school, I had the opportunity to join the Biomedical Science Academy at my school—an elective that allowed me to step into the roles of biomedical science professionals and learn about subjects like anatomy and physiology, cell biology, forensic science, genetic engineering, and diseases like cancer. I loved it, and because of my background as a leukemia survivor, I will go on to help children with cancer as a Pediatric Oncologist.





# NATALIE R.

University of Cincinnati



I beat cancer at the age of 18. If someone would have told me prior that I wouldn't be graduating, that I would be diagnosed with lymphoma, have to have eggs harvested, have a port inserted, go through chemotherapy, lose all of my hair, and that I would have to come back a year later to complete my senior year, I would've called them insane.

Cancer certainly affected me physically, but equally as much mentally. I was broken; focused on what should've been.

Once I realized I needed to break out of this mindset—to use my experience to lead and influence others—I felt empowered and capable to pursue a male-oriented career in construction management. I hope this inspires others to follow their own fulfilling paths. In addition, my family, friends and I helped raise funds for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and I am now excited to serve as LLS's honored hero.

Today I can say that cancer is the most formative event of my life. It forced me to rethink and reshape my outlook on life and to deeply appreciate even the smallest moments.





# NATHANIEL H.

Auburn University



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

I didn't fully understand then—but hearing at the age of 15 that I was just diagnosed with T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL) would alter nearly every aspect of my life.

While most of my peers were grumbling about having to wear a mask, I was making weekly visits to the Children's Hospital of Alabama in Birmingham. This involved a 2-hour ride each way and demanding treatments that exhausted me both mentally and physically. I had only one escape from this painful cycle: my love of music.

During one visit, the hospital's social worker suggested I contact Teen Cancer America (TCA), and I soon learned that music is a cornerstone they use to help teens diagnosed with cancer—in particular, through their Play it Back program. Through this, I prepared and shared ideas and melodies with a music producer and crafted them into fully produced songs. To-date, I have completed fifteen fully produced songs and have an equal number in-development.

Now, I look forward to the next chapter of my life working toward a Bachelor of Arts in Music, Composition and Technology with Auburn University.





# NICHOLAS W.

University of Wisconsin Milwaukee



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

After my experience with Burkitt lymphoma at age 6 and Ph-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia (Ph+ ALL) at age 14, I wanted to become a physician assistant in oncology. It wasn't until I nearly finished my sophomore year of college when I relapsed with leukemia that I decided to pursue nursing instead.

I want to mimic the skills of my own wonderful nurses—I know from personal experience that it is not easy being the one lying in the hospital bed.

However, each diagnosis has impacted my mindset in its own way. Burkitt lymphoma taught me to accept people for their differences, including myself. My first leukemia diagnosis helped me commit to my education. Now, after my third diagnosis, I've learned that you cannot put a value on a unique life perspective or the things we learn from going through hardships.

It makes me emotional when people tell me how much of an inspiration I am, as I do not know what to say since it was not a choice. Despite everything, I am a more empathetic and well-rounded individual, and I appreciate life because of it.



★ ★  
★ **NICOLAS B.**  
Pace University



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"What is your objective as an actor?" was a question I was asked during my freshman year.

"To move the audience by making them feel the humor, empathy, or compassion of the character I would be portraying," I said.

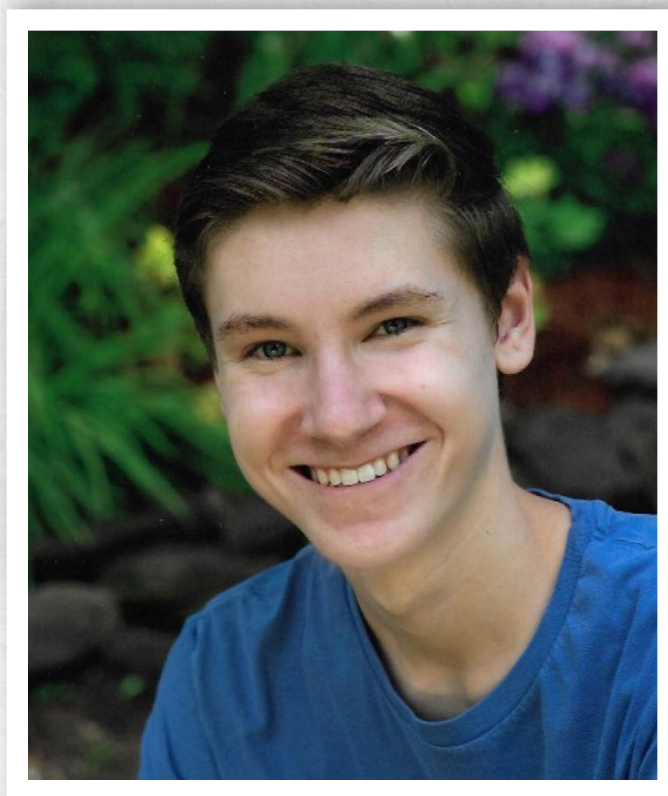
I have always looked to the future. Almost everything I have done in my personal life has been preparing for what's next. I reinvent myself for the better in each activity because I don't want to stay in my comfort zone. And in May 2020, that mentality was put to the test.

Eleventh grade was a rollercoaster with my health, but my attitude, heart, and soul remained focused on my future, and I worked hard to accept and embrace this change. Because of this experience and my drive to grow from it, I want to inspire others and use my voice to give back. I want to join a community that shares my passion, a place where I can learn and contribute as well to my peers: Fine Arts.

The world is constantly moving, and we cannot stay still or we stay behind.



★ ★  
★ **PATRICK M.**  
Union College



December 2008: I was a five-year-old cancer patient. My parents were facing the greatest challenge of their lives. And me? I was fine. I still enjoyed painting with the Child Life specialists. I still enjoyed playing with my brother. Santa still visited children in the hospital. I was positive.

May 2021: I had been in remission for nearly a decade, and the memories of my treatment had largely faded. I was different. I agreed to join my friend David at Planet Fitness for the first time, and I learned to love the feeling of challenging myself.

August 2022: I was up with the sunrise, running across a mountain ridge. By the end of the day, I not only ran 26.2 miles, but I broke the record by over 2 ½ hours. Though I could hardly walk, I never felt stronger.

When I look back on the journey that I have taken to find strength within myself, I realize something surprising: it was there since my diagnosis. For as long as I live, I hope to remember the strength of that five-year-old cancer patient, because it is enough to pull me through any challenge.





# RACHAEL N.

University of Wisconsin - Madison



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

The first psychology class I took was 10th-grade Positive Psychology where I learned about resilience. The concept resonated deeply with me, especially after my sister's cancer-related death. Up until then, I never thought anyone in my family or I would go through such an immense loss. My friend from class and I talked at length about it—how you never think it's going to happen to you.

Days later, I was diagnosed with cancer too.

It is hard to understand your emotions throughout cancer treatment because of so many factors. The one thing that helped me process it all was my background in Positive Psychology. Concepts like PERMA, strength & virtues, grit, and gratitude enabled me to fight with determination and be grateful for the days I could go outside. After my treatment was over, I knew that psychology is what I wanted to do.

One of my greatest goals is to research adolescent cancer patient and survivor mentalities, using my knowledge and experience to raise awareness and support those in need.





# REESE G.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Tour De Court Award

At twenty-two months old I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Not only has this shaped my future career goals, but also my personality and way of thinking.

A trip to the ER for a high fever led to a diagnosis of pneumonia, admittance to the hospital, and an abrupt visit to Pediatric Oncology. Nothing prepared us for that day nor the next 3 years of treatment at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

I have dedicated my life to sharing my journey and creating awareness of childhood cancer. My diagnosis gave me a “second-chance” outlook on life and has encouraged me to become a registered nurse working in pediatric oncology. During my own treatment, the nurses took so much interest in getting to know me. The connection I made with each of them was special and I want to be that nurse for other young cancer patients.

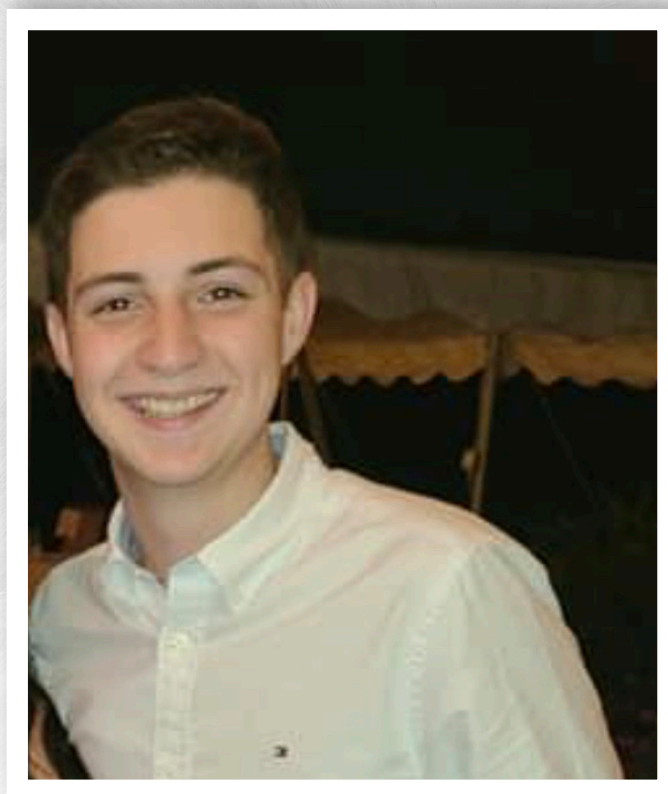
If I were ever to be asked the question, would you go back and change your childhood if you could? While most people would have to really think about their answer, my answer would be no, without hesitation.





# RYAN C.

East Carolina University



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

I may not remember my initial diagnosis at 2 ½ years old with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, but I do recall my two relapses. Cancer hasn't just affected me; it changed my whole family. Now and in the future, I want to expand my knowledge of these experiences and work to get a degree in pharmaceuticals.

After my first relapse, I remember my parents were brought into a conference room to discuss treatment options. At 9 years old, I was fine when they came back and told me I would be participating in a clinical trial. At 15, after relapsing a second time and being diagnosed with lymphoma, I was lucky to find a match for a bone marrow transplant. Now, at 20, I want to explore the treatments that were given to me as a child and learn more about how they affect the body—in both positive and negative ways.

I am a 3-time cancer survivor, and I strive to look at the many positive ways this has affected my life, including how it has impacted my future career.





# RYAN S.

Texas A&M University



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

I declared that I wanted to be an oncologist for the first time when I was in third grade. I lost my grandfather to cancer. Even then, I wanted to find better medical solutions. Three years later, my diagnosis solidified this goal.

I encountered several uncommon and long-lasting side effects from my treatment. The one medication that could not be removed from my plan was also the one that caused extreme nerve pain and damage and led me to lose coordination in my hands and movement in my legs from the knee down. Every day I wasn't at the hospital for chemotherapy, I was there for physical or occupational therapy. This inspired me to pursue a career that would lead to alternative treatments for patients like me.

My physical therapist Stu is an example of the healthcare provider I aspire to be. He inspires me to do the same for others, and now, because of him, I understand the importance of treating the whole person, not just the injury or illness.

Now, I am attending Texas A&M University, majoring in neuroscience with a goal to have a career in oncology.





# SARAH S.

Florida State University



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Eleven years old: That is the age I was when my life changed for the better, despite it seeming like the worst. I was diagnosed with acute lymphatic leukemia. Being young but still old enough to understand was difficult, but also a blessing in disguise.

This diagnosis took me away from my school, my friends, my sport, and my church. I was forced into isolation from many things I loved, but it also illuminated a strong family connection through their never-ending support.

In addition, the hospital staff showed me what it meant to truly care for people. They led me to discover my desire to do the same: nursing. About a year into treatment, I began asking to perform simple tasks. The more I was able to help, the more I realized how much I wanted to help. The map to my future career was beginning to unfold.

I plan to not only pursue my dream in hopes of a happy, successful future; but also to help people who are struggling to find comfort, in hopes that it encourages them to pass it on in their own lives.





# SOFIA S.

Nova Southeastern University



## **LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award**

I'll be honest, understanding what your diagnosis teaches you takes years to come to terms with and I'm fortunate enough to be able to put it together. Watching how my nurses helped me during my treatment solidified the idea of being a pediatric oncology nurse. Currently, I am in nursing school for a BSN program and have one year left in the program.

At the end of the Spring 2022 semester, I was elected as the College of Nursing Student Government President, which gives me the opportunity to advocate for all nursing students. Over the years I have realized that I enjoy being vocal about things I'm passionate about and being an advocate for those who do not get a say which has pushed me into leadership roles. I started leaning into leadership roles following my diagnosis since I watched a team be my advocate and I want to give the same experience to others. My diagnosis showed me it's important to take every available opportunity because you never know when you won't be able to do what you're passionate about.



★ ★  
★  
**SUMMER B.**  
Central College



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Cancer was never part of my plan. Since I can remember, I've always kept a list of the steps I needed to take in order to get to my next stage in life, like my dream schools or the grades I needed to get. After being accepted to Cornell College to study biochemistry, my first check was made. That was 2 years ago. Since then, I transferred to Central College and am still well on my way to becoming either a PA or chiropractor.

I've only ever dreamed of pursuing a career in medicine. Hodgkin's lymphoma was never supposed to be there, but after completing my last chemotherapy treatment, I've decided that I can't live my life based off a checklist anymore. There are too many unexpected good things. Even my battle with cancer.

I've always believed that the greatest leaders were invincible; nothing could shake them. What I've realized is that this mentality was flawed. I've strengthened relationships, reflected on what's most important, and took a much-needed deep breath. Cancer gave me a new definition of leadership.





# TERESA N.

University of Texas at Austin



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After my first diagnosis, I was determined to pursue a career in medicine—it made sense to work in a field that inspired and treated me. But when I relapsed, I realized I had romanticized my first cancer journey. Being admitted into the hospital again and going through chemotherapy and constant procedures brought back memories I had subconsciously blocked out. While I am grateful for the people that nursed me back to health and the knowledge I gained, my relapse made me realize I was pursuing a career in medicine for aesthetics. Funnily, my diagnosis shaped and influenced my career path by leading me away from medical-related occupations.

However, my experiences did make me want to help others, as my doctors and nurses helped me. Their compassion influenced my growth in understanding and sympathy. After some time volunteering and teaching, I know now that with any career, you can help people in a multitude of ways. For me, I have decided to become a prosecutor.

I have always been interested in true crime and political-related subjects. As a prosecutor, I hope to help many different types of individuals.



# UMER S.

University of Southern California



If children end up in the ER after playing at Bounce-o-Rama, it's usually because of a sprained ankle. For me, it was cancer. Among mostly scary experiences at the hospital, I also made a new friend: Omar. When I left the hospital, Omar stayed, but I could always count on him being there during my outpatient checkups. Until he wasn't, and I lost my friend.

After that, it was hard for me to trust people—I experienced bullying and doubted my abilities. But in the following years, I empowered myself to stand up for others, and I learned to listen and empathize, providing a safe space. It raised a lot of questions.

What motivates bullies? Does the brain have power to undo acquired behavior? Raised in a multilingual, multi-generational home, I often wonder how the home environment affects a child's cognition. How do these nuances spare perspective? My curiosity led me to explore Cognitive Science.

Leukemia scarred my childhood; however, it also made me champion causes to cure cancer, and I am grateful for every experience that led me to the person I've become.





# WILLIAM A.

College For Creative Studies



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When I was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of two, it proved to be one of the biggest challenges I'd ever have to face. I've never had the most vivid memories of that time, but I do remember watching *Finding Nemo*, *Curious George Goes to the Hospital*, and *Astroboy*—wondering if the port in my chest was also for some strange energy source and that I might have been revived from the dead. These films contributed to my understanding of the world.

While there is a fair bit of literature for kids and parents to read about children with illnesses, there aren't many shows or movies that show their reality. I'd like to advocate for a positive representation of sick kids on television through shows that make other children aware and help those who suffer from severe illnesses feel seen, heard, and empowered.

Effective art is the communication of an idea, and has inspired me to major in illustration. My eventual goal is to pitch my own ideas in the hopes of giving critically ill kids a hero specifically made to represent them and what they're going through.





# WILLIAM K.

Coastal Carolina University



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It's hard to describe what a perfect golf shot feels like. For a split second, it's freeing. Like in life, there are plenty of ups and downs in 18 holes, and I've learned to appreciate both.

In May of 2009, I was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. While I'm glad I don't remember much of my initial diagnosis, my parents' reaction to the news is tough to forget as I watched from a stiff, small hospital bed. Now, my everyday challenges are no different than anyone else my age, but I think I'm able to hurdle them better than most given this experience.

Today, I am attending Coastal Carolina University for marketing and am enrolled in the Professional Golf Management program. The mindset I needed to fight leukemia is what helped me fall in love with golf. There's bound to be times in life and in the sport where things go off the rails, but how you recover is the most important part.





# WILLIAM M.

Lewis and Clark College



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

I remember things from a very young age. I still remember the feeling of waking up loopy after a dose of ketamine, calling the doctor Dr. Funny, the sticky pads placed on my chest to monitor vitals, my soft blanket from home tucked under my arm, and being wheeled away in my stroller at the end of a visit.

I have physically recovered from leukemia, but the emotional effects remain. Receiving chemotherapy over several years can affect one's cognitive system—for me it was my executive functioning, including organization and time management. By identifying root issue, I was able to make changes in my routine to compensate, and carry with me a sense of optimism, compassion, and a desire to help others through challenges.

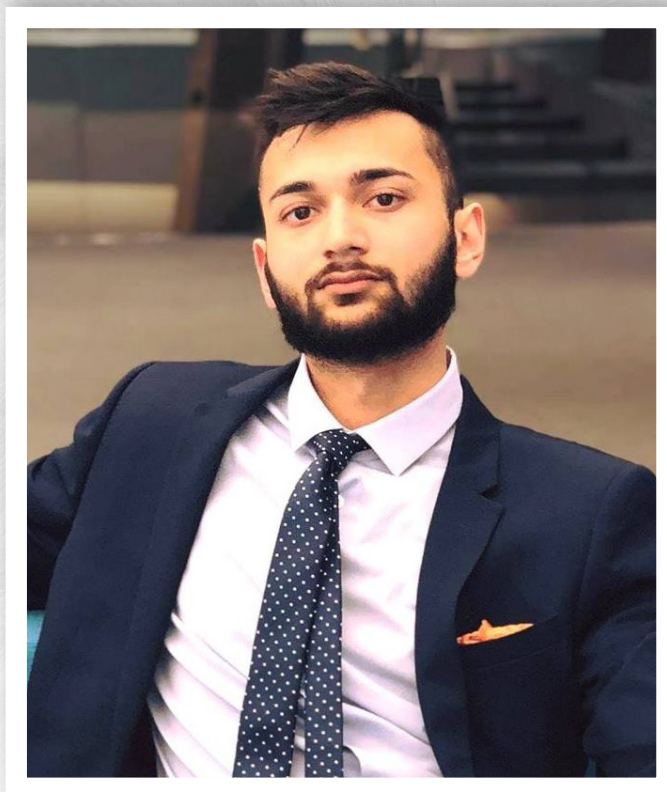
Because of my experiences, I want to be able to bring joy to children during their hospital visits and treatments. I want to give back what I know helped me during those difficult times. I know that I will pursue a professional path that will allow me to help those in need, whether it is economical, medical, or creative in nature.





# XAVIER J.-K.

Houston Community College



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation Award

"If the cancer is serious, then I'm not ready to fight it." At that point in my life, I was genuinely prepared to die. It was December of 2020, during the peak of a COVID-19 outbreak in Houston, when I was told that I had been diagnosed with stage 2 Hodgkin lymphoma.

At that time, I knew nothing about lymphoma—I thought, "How could this happen to me?" My oncologist answered, "Unfortunately, you'll have to live your life never knowing the answer." And he was right. Cancer does not discriminate. It was then that I began to reconsider my purpose in life.

I knew I wanted to work in healthcare. It must have been fate or some universal energy, but I came across a program called Medical Dosimetry—a science specializing in creating radiation treatment plans for cancer patients.

One day I want to be able to say that I got cancer because it gave me what I had been looking for. It gave me a purpose and helped me find the career path that was right for me.





# ZACHARY S.

Rutgers University-Camden



## LLS Scholarship for Blood Cancer Survivors, the ACE Family Foundation Award

In August of 2019, just as I was entering my freshman year of high school, I was told that I had relapsed with central nervous system (CNS) leukemia. After my first bout with leukemia as a toddler, I had been cancer-free for 8 years. Looking back, I realize now that spending hours in and out of hospitals introduced me to some of the kindest, most comforting, and talented people in the world—my nurses.

Some of my toughest days were turned around by a conversation with my nurses, and that is what I want to be able to do for other children as a nurse myself. As a young man going through this experience, it was extremely comforting to have male nurses—naturally, boys and girls have different questions and concerns. I want to help close that gender gap. My experience as a patient—and what once was the scariest thing in my life—will now be my strongest asset in my career.

I have spent over 7 years of my life enduring treatment for cancer. But I have many years ahead of me to be healthy and change the lives of others.





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