



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More Than 90 Storytellers Receive Scholarships from the Highlights Foundation in Support of Their Work to Inspire Kids

Honesdale, PA – The Highlights Foundation has just awarded scholarships to more than 90 aspiring and established children’s authors and illustrators, marking the largest yearly scholarship investment to date in the organization’s history.

Recipients include: Tonya Abari (The Brown Bookshelf Scholarship), Aisha Adebayo, Adeeba, Jenniffer Alexander-Jones (I, Too, Arts Collective Scholarship), Abhi Alwar (Jerome Weisman Scholarship), Anjali Amit, Elyse Årring (Kidlit Pride Scholarship), Ms. Jamila Beale, Angela Ivy Belgrave (James Cross Giblin Scholarship), Monica Moncrieffe Bennett (Nikki Grimes Scholarship), Hallie M. Bertling, Renee Bolla, Valerie Bolling (Debra Winegarten Scholarship), Lynnor Bontigao (kidlitwomen* Scholarship), Sid Champagne (Transgender Picture Book Storytellers Scholarship), MeiLin Chan, Sarah Claxton, Theresa Cocci, Bay Collyns, Chelsea A. C. Connor (Diversify Science in Illustration Scholarship), Kandace Coston (I, Too, Arts Collective Scholarship), Christiana Doucette, Tonya Duncan Ellis (The Brown Bookshelf Scholarship), Jamie Ericson, AJ Eversole (Indigenous Storytellers Scholarship), Monique Fields (Renée Watson Scholarship), Claudia Riiff Finseth (Wheeler Whole Novel Scholarship), Halli Gomez, Juliet Goodman, Tonya K. Grant, E. Gale Greenlee (Anti-Bias Book Bearer Scholarship), Gennie Gorback, Jas Hammonds (Debra Winegarten Scholarship), Cressida Hanson, Judith Hijikata, Denise Hanh Huynh (AAPI Storyteller Scholarship), LaTonya R. Jackson (Floyd Cooper Scholarship), Czarrah Bernadette Jarapa (Christine & Kenneth Taylor-Butler Scholarship), Valerie Jauregui, Karen Keesling, Valerie Kemp (Community Connection Scholarship), Caroline Kessler (Rebecca Kai Dotlich Scholarship), Kathlyn J. Kirkwood (Kay Yoder Scholarship), Cassey Kikuchi Kivnick (AAPI Storytellers Scholarship), Christine Kim Kornylak, Morgan Lau (Diversify Science in Illustration Scholarship), Naomie Laurent (The Brown Bookshelf Scholarship), Shauna Lauricella (Stuart Kirkfield Scholarship), Jean Kuo Lee, Roxsy Lin (Latinx Storytellers Scholarship), K.B. Lindeborg (Richard Bell Scholarship), Jennifer Liss (Lee Bennett Hopkins Scholarship), Mariana Llanos, Pooja Makhijani, Maria Marianayagam, Beth Mehall, Alison Merz, Debbie Meyer, Johari "J.P." Mitchell, Shuba Mohan, Allary Montague, Shelia P. Moses, Gloria Muñoz (Diverse Verse Scholarship), Heather Nelson, Brittany Page (Patricia Lee Gauch Scholarship), Emily Rose Perez, Gretchen Potter (Indigenous Storyteller Scholarship), Ainissa Ramirez (Jack Myers Scholarship), Zahra Raza, Nat Razi (Kidlit Pride Scholarship), Yasmin Rodino (kidlitwomen* Scholarship), Taylor Ross, Delia Ruiz, Khahlia Sanders (Floyd Cooper Scholarship), Anna Sortino (Disability Representation Scholarship), Cathy Stenquist, Daniel Fergus Tamulonis, Marie Tang, Patricia Tanumihardja (Christine & Kenneth Taylor-Butler Scholarship), Gabby Taub (Jewish Writers/Illustrators of Color Scholarship), Ronda Taylor

(Diverse Verse Scholarship), Shirley V. Ting, Lily Tschudi-Campbell, Joyce Patricia Uglow (Jane Yolen & Heidi EY Stemple Scholarship), Pradeep Velugubantla, Gwendolyn Wallace, Leslie Stall Widener (Indigenous Storytellers Scholarship), M.O. Yuksel, Meghan Zarembo (Steve Light Scholarship), and others.

While the scholarships will be awarded now and used in 2022-2023, the investment that the Highlights Foundation is making in these storytellers is designed to have a longer-term, broader impact. That's because the investment is rooted in the work that these authors and illustrators are doing to inspire kids through story.

"After volunteering in numerous classrooms and working at summer camps, I realized how much we can learn from children if only we listen. I tell people that I have learned more about love, community, and justice from children than I ever have from adults. All children deserve books that are honest with them about this wild world, and I wasn't seeing enough of that in the classrooms I worked in, said scholarship recipient Gwendolyn Wallace in her application.

"[Children's] books have a great deal of power—to create empathy, to foster connection, to break down barriers, and to allow readers to feel seen. These are the drivers behind my writing," said Maria Marianayagam.

"We are positively impacting children and young adults by amplifying the voices of these storytellers. It is an honor to do this work alongside our entire community, and we're happy that this year's scholarship recipients will have new opportunities to hone their craft with the Highlights Foundation," says George Brown, Executive Director.

The scholarship awards included full and partial tuition scholarships for workshops that take place at the Highlights Foundation Retreat Center, full tuition scholarships for online courses through the Highlights Foundation, and scholarships for personal retreats at the Highlights Foundation Retreat Center.

The Highlights Foundation extends heartfelt thanks to the donors, partners, scholarship committee members, staff, and others who worked together on this year's awards. Many scholarships are made possible through generous donations from Highlights Foundation supporters who believe in the organization's mission: to positively impact children by amplifying the voices of storytellers who inform, educate, and inspire children to become their best selves. Several awards are also sponsored by organizations who have partnered with the Highlights Foundation to make scholarships available.

For a full list of the scholarships and their sponsors, visit <https://www.highlightsfoundation.org/scholarships/>. To contribute to the Highlights Foundation Scholarship program, donate online at <https://www.highlightsfoundation.org/donate-online/>.

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CONTACTS:

George Brown, Executive Director, Highlights Foundation (George.Brown@highlightsfoundation.org)