



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Highlights Foundation Invests in 58 Storytellers to Support Their Work to Inspire Kids**

**Honesdale, PA** – The Highlights Foundation has just awarded scholarships to 58 aspiring and established children’s authors and illustrators.

Recipients and their awarded scholarships are included below.

While the scholarships will be awarded now and used in 2023-2024, 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.

“The power of a book is magical. I have been a reader all my life, and I can attest that books have transformed me in many ways. When my first book came out, and young girls wrote to me about how my story touched them, it was a dream realized,” said scholarship recipient Anne Spollen during the application process.

“Reading can save lives, and not in just a figurative sense. I just want to make a difference, save a life, and give someone the light I found in books as a kid,” said Michael Teixeira, a Whole Novel General Scholarship recipient.

One recipient’s intentions were crystallized when she saw her scholarship’s namesake interacting with children years ago at a bookstore event. Jennifer Mack-Watkins is this year’s Floyd Cooper scholar, and she recounted seeing his connection to children firsthand in her application.

“My true passion is building spaces for children to use their imaginations, and it guides much of my work. It is through books that I can best reach and inspire this audience, sparking in them the [type of] creativity that is central to my life. I witnessed this same spark when Floyd Cooper visited a small bookstore in Hoboken, NJ. On that day, I was so amazed by his connection to the children, and his passion for sharing his artistic practice with them,” she said.

“The reason we do this is because of the kids and teens who are going to be inspired by the stories that are born and honed here,” says George Brown, Executive Director. “Scholarships are meaningful for our organization because it’s a big part of our mission. To invest in storytellers is to invest in the young minds who will shape our future.”

Pamela Courtney, an author who got involved with Highlights Foundation first as a student, then as a fellow, and now as a faculty member, agrees. She served on this year's application review committee. "This was such a humbling experience. To think, I was gifted the opportunity to be part of dreams being realized. The gravity of that is indeed humbling. The works of these amazing and brave writers and illustrators will touch lives in so many amazing ways," said Courtney.

The scholarship awards include full tuition for online and in-person workshops and personal retreats at the Highlights Foundation. They are made possible through generous donations from Highlights Foundation supporters and partner organizations 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.

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](mailto:George.Brown@highlightsfoundation.org))

**Recipients include the storytellers below, and three additional storytellers (including recipients of General Scholarships and the [Wheeler Whole Novel Workshop 50+ Award](#)):**

- Sara Holly Ackerman ([PJ Library Scholarship](#))
- Débora Adachi ([kidlitwomen\\* Scholarship](#))
- Abhi Alwar ([Jerome Weisman Scholarship](#))
- Ana Aranda ([Debra Winegarten Scholarship](#))
- Sarah Aroeste ([PJ Library Scholarship](#))
- Kesi Augustine ([The Brown Bookshelf Scholarship](#))
- Niki Averton (General Scholarship/Whole Novel Workshop)
- Kristina Bejar ([Steve Light Scholarship](#))
- Naisa Beaumont (General Scholarship/Whole Novel Workshop)
- Bettie Boswell ([Richard H. Bell Scholarship](#))
- Valerie Bolling ([Renée Watson Scholarship](#))
- Alice Brereton (General Scholarship)

- Meredith Seung Mee Buse ([Send a Teacher to Summer Camp Scholarship](#))
- Anne Soon Choi ([Community Connection Scholarship](#))
- Lindsay "Bones" Cordero ([Diversify Science Scholarship for Illustrators](#))
- H.E. Edgmon ([Native Creatives Scholarship](#))
- Gabrielle F. ([Christine & Kenneth Taylor-Butler Scholarship](#))
- Layla Fallah (General Scholarship)
- Cynthia Fuentes ([Patricia Lee Gauch Scholarship](#))
- Manuia Heinrich Sue ([Pacific Islander Storyteller Scholarship](#))
- Rita Lorraine Hubbard ([Kay Yoder Scholarship for History Writers](#))
- Steph B. Jones (General Scholarship)
- Cheryl Kim ([James Cross Giblin Scholarship](#))
- HyoYoung Minna Kim ([Stuart Kirkfield Scholarship](#))
- Camellia Koo (General Scholarship)
- Susan Kusel ([PJ Library Scholarship](#))
- K.B. Lindeborg ([Jane Yolen & Heidi EY Stemple Scholarship](#))
- Steph Littlebird ([Paula Cohen Scholarship for Picture Book Creators](#))
- Dayna Lorentz ([PJ Library Scholarship](#))
- Jennifer Mack-Watkins ([Floyd Cooper Scholarship](#))
- Jamie McGhee ([I, Too Arts Collective Scholarship](#))
- Alexandra Millarhouse ([Jack Myers Scholarship](#))
- Ian B Miller ([Disability Representation in Children's Books Scholarship](#))
- Selime Okuyan ([SCBWI Impact Fund Scholarship](#))
- Khushboo Patel ([Patricia Lee Gauch Scholarship](#))
- Synte Peacock (General Scholarship)
- Shruthi Rao ([Diverse Verse Scholarship](#))
- Genielysse Reyes ([Lee Bennett Hopkins Scholarship](#))
- Megan Reyes (General Scholarship)
- Alyssa Reynoso-Morris ([Latinx Storyteller Scholarship](#))
- Jessica Rodriguez ([Diverse Verse Scholarship](#))

- Akiko Sekihata ([Asian & Asian American Storyteller Scholarship](#))
- Karol Ruth Silverstein (General Scholarship/Whole Novel Workshop)
- Simone Smith ([The Brown Bookshelf Scholarship](#))
- Anne Spollen (General Scholarship)
- Shannon Stocker ([Jane Yolen & Heidi EY Stemple Scholarship](#))
- Michael Texeira (General Scholarship/Whole Novel Workshop)
- Tanya Sangpun Thamkruphat ([Rebecca Kai Dotlich Scholarship](#))
- MaryBeth Timothy ([Native Creatives Scholarship](#))
- Trisha Tobias ([Nikki Grimes Scholarship](#))
- Alana Tyson ([Paula Cohen Scholarship for Picture Book Creators](#))
- Peggy Watson (General Scholarship)
- A.M. Wild ([Transgender and Nonbinary Scholarship for Picture Book Storytellers](#))
- Jessica Yoon ([Anti-Bias Book Bearer Scholarship](#))
- August Zhang ([Kidlit Pride Scholarship](#))