

WJA Foundation Announces Nearly \$60,000 in Scholarships this Year, Helping Many Students From Diverse Backgrounds Advance Their Careers in the Industry

The Women's Jewelry Association Foundation is pleased to announce its scholarship recipients, who will receive a total of \$57,500 in scholarship funds for the 2022-2023 program year.

Funds for WJA Foundation scholarships are raised through individual donations and various fundraising events and initiatives held throughout the year, including #GivingTuesday, a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world.

Scholarship winners received awards in six different categories. These include the Cindy Edelstein Jewelry Design Scholarship, the Gabriel Love Foundation Scholarship, Designer Category Scholarship, and Designer/Creator Scholarship. WJA Foundation also launched two new awards this year – the Radiant Minds Technology Scholarship and WJA Diversity Scholarships for GIA Education.

The inaugural Radiant Minds Technology Scholarship has been awarded to Brittany Ylanlan, a student studying Computer Programming and Mobile Applications Development at Tidewater Community College. This scholarship was created collaboratively between WJA Foundation, Jewelers Mutual Group, and Black in Jewelry Coalition, with the goal of providing women of color the education they need to be successful in tech-related jobs within the jewelry and watch industry. The recipient receives funding for a training or certification program focused on software engineering, including user-experience design, data analytics, and front and back-end design and web development, at a school of their choice, approved by the scholarship committee.

WJA Foundation received a generous pledge from the Gemological Institute of America to fund new scholarships for students from underrepresented communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+, wishing to take on-campus or eLearning courses through GIA Education. Recipients are able to select from a variety of offerings, including GIA's online Applied Jewelry Professional (AJP®) diploma program and Diamond Essentials and Diamonds and Diamond Grading courses, or its on-campus Graduate Colored Stones diploma program and Jewelry Design certificate course. This year, scholarships were awarded to Cloyette Harris, Koolebogile Veronicah Mosweu, Grace Omwanza, Christina Soto, Ashley Tien, and Rebecca Wagner.

The Gabriel Love Foundation Scholarship has been awarded to Oksana Membreno, a student at the Gemological Institute of America. The \$5,000 scholarship was established and funded by

the Gabriel Love Foundation of Gabriel & Co., the New York-based fine jewelry brand. The WJA scholarship provides funding for students who want to achieve professional growth within the jewelry industry, and who plan to use their careers in jewelry to improve communities and participate in charitable efforts.

The Cindy Edelstein Scholarship, created to honor the legacy of long-time WJA Board member Cindy Edelstein, has been awarded to Gabrielle Saunders, a student at the Gemological Institute of America. This scholarship is given in memory of Cindy, who was the jewelry industry's passionate advocate for jewelry designers entering the field. For that reason, the \$5,000 scholarship is awarded to emerging fine jewelry designers or artisans and memorializes Edelstein's tireless pursuit of educating, mentoring, and coaching these entrepreneurs. The recipient can pursue jewelry design, metalsmithing, or business courses, providing they are focused on improving their artistry and/or their designer jewelry business.

WJA Foundation also provides various scholarships to students enrolled in jewelry or metalsmithing programs at accredited colleges, universities, or training schools between August 1, 2022, and July 31, 2023. This year's Designer Category winner is Emma McSallis (Maine College of Art and Design), and the Designer/Creator Category winner is Kindred Lubeck (Gemological Institute of America).

Donations to the WJA Foundation can be made here:

<https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com/foundation>

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Questions about the Women's Jewelry Association Foundation can be directed to WJA Executive Director, Jennifer Markas at jennifer@womensjewelryassociation.com.

About Women's Jewelry Association Foundation

WJA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that offers a variety of scholarships and grants to support the career growth and educational endeavors of professionals in the jewelry and watch industries. To learn more, visit [womensjewelryassociation.com](https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com).