

HOPE GIVING CIRCLE

The HOPE Giving Circle brings together influential women of diverse backgrounds with a common goal of supporting students in achieving their educational goals and empowering them to reach their full potential. Members combine their resources to make a greater collective impact on the lives of students pursuing higher education at Harper College. Through scholarship support, mentoring, professional development opportunities and other means, the HOPE Giving Circle is committed to creating and enhancing educational and leadership opportunities.

Give or become a member today at harpercollege.edu/hope.

**HOPE Giving Circle
Winter Social**

Thursday, January 15, 2026

HOPE Giving Circle Celebrates 10 Years of Empowering Harper College Students

Dear Friends of HOPE,

We are thrilled to begin our tenure as co-chairs of the HOPE Giving Circle during this milestone year: our 10th anniversary!

Thanks to your generosity and commitment, we are awarding **10 scholarships of \$10,000 each** to some exceptional Harper students as part of our **HOPE 10 for 10** anniversary initiative. These students—future nurses, engineers, attorneys, entrepreneurs, and changemakers—represent the very best of Harper and the promise of what education and opportunity can unlock.

At the HOPE Scholarship Reception on August 7, many of you had the chance to meet these remarkable recipients. Their stories of perseverance, passion and purpose are a powerful reminder of why HOPE exists. Each one embodies the mission we share: to uplift, empower and invest in the next generation of leaders.

This achievement is a true reflection of what we can do together. ***And we're just getting started!***

Looking ahead, we are more energized than ever to grow our impact. With your continued support—whether through renewing your membership, increasing your gift, or inviting others to join—we can continue to expand access to life-changing scholarships and mentorship.

THANK YOU for making this anniversary year so meaningful. Let's carry this momentum forward and build the future of HOPE, together.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Susan Coe Heitsch & Ella Liberman
Co-Chairs, HOPE Giving Circle



Susan Coe Heitsch



Ella Liberman

Celebrating the Collective Impact of the HOPE Giving Circle



2025 HOPE Recipients Celebrated at Annual Scholarship Awards Reception

The HOPE Giving Circle celebrated the newest class of HOPE scholarship recipients at the scholarship reception in August. This year, the group awarded \$10,000 scholarships to 10 Harper students: Sara Abualreesh, Murtaza Anjarwala, Devon Freitag, Nour Husseini, Adepeju Oyefusi, Mehak Rizvi, Jaskirat Singh, Jeremiah Somerville, Maria Tovar and Natalia VonderHeide. Each student spoke about their educational and career goals at the awards reception.

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“Our scholarship recipients tonight are the perfect example of Harper’s brightest and best,” said Ella Liberman, HOPE Giving Circle Co-Chair. “Their stories move us, their dreams inspire us, and thanks to the support of HOPE, their futures are filled with possibility. I can’t wait to see where each of them goes next.”

HOPE Giving Circle in 2025

(cumulative since 2016 launch)

212 DONORS

have supported the
HOPE Scholarship Fund.

\$593,285 RAISED

42 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

including 10 awarded for 25-26 academic year

\$420,000 AWARDED

The HOPE Giving Circle has

46 MEMBERS

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Meet the 2025 HOPE Scholarship Recipients



Sara Abualreesh

Sara Abualreesh is a health sciences student at Harper College, completing prerequisites for UIC's nursing program.

Passionate about helping others, she volunteers with Feed My Starving Children and her local

mosque, experiences that inspired her nursing path. Sara sees nurses as advocates who combine knowledge and empathy to support patients. She plans to become a travel nurse to gain diverse clinical experience and hopes to study abroad to explore global healthcare. Long-term, she aspires to become a nurse practitioner, committed to a lifelong career of compassionate, adaptable care in an ever-evolving field.



Devon Freitag

Devon Freitag is a 4.0 GPA nursing student at Harper College, entering her final year. A former EMT during the COVID-19 pandemic, she brings real-world healthcare experience

to her studies. Raised in the foster care system and overcoming a learning

disability, Devon channels adversity into advocacy. She volunteers with NAMI, sharing her story to destigmatize mental illness, and mentors peers at Harper to foster inclusive learning. Devon plans to earn her BSN and become a nursing educator specializing in psychosocial care. Her mission is to empower underserved communities and inspire future nurses through empathy, resilience and education.



Murtaza Anjarwala

Murtaza Anjarwala, a 4.0 GPA student at Harper College, is pursuing an Associate of Science in electrical and computer engineering. A Schaumburg High School graduate, he's passionate about physics, technology and

innovation. He's active in the Honors Program, the Harper Society of Engineers, and a liberal arts research cohort at Oakton College's RICE Center. Murtaza blends technical skills with social insight, exploring engineering solutions in renewable energy and biomedical tech. He plans to transfer to the University of Illinois and pursue a master's degree, aiming to drive technological progress and make a lasting societal impact through innovation.



Nour Hussein

Nour Hussein, a 4.0 GPA student at Harper College, is pursuing an Associate in Engineering Science with plans to transfer to UIUC for a bachelor's and accelerated master's in computer science.

A former research assistant in astrophysics at Loyola, she earned credit on three publications. She interned at the Wisconsin IceCube Particle Astrophysics Center and Opteam AI, blending technical innovation with education and impact. At IMSA, she co-founded SUSTAIN, a sustainability app, and won national awards. Active in WISE and Phi Theta Kappa, Nour aspires to build mission-driven technologies that advance sustainability, accessibility and social good through programming and AI.



Adepeju Oyefusi

Adepeju Oyefusi, a dedicated accounting student at Harper College, balances academic excellence with raising three children and working multiple jobs. Driven by financial literacy and community empowerment, she aspires to become a CPA and eventually open her own firm to support small businesses in underserved communities. She plans to transfer to Southern Illinois University to continue her studies. Adepeju is also active in community service, volunteering at her church to distribute essential items to families in need. Her resilience, determination and passion for making a positive impact make her a deserving HOPE Scholarship recipient.



Jaskirat Singh

Jaskirat Singh is an Aerospace Engineering student at Harper College, aspiring to become a NASA research engineer focused on astronaut programs and exoplanet exploration. Inspired by a family legacy in the Indian Air Force, he developed a passion for flight and space early on. A member of the Honors Program and Harper Society of Engineers, he also led the Robot Rumble club, gaining hands-on engineering experience. Jaskirat has been involved in NASA's Community of Aerospace Scholars and is active in community service through the Sikh Religious Society. His goal is to innovate in aerospace while giving back through selfless service.



Mehak Rizvi

Mehak Rizvi, a 4.0 GPA student at Harper College, is pursuing an associate degree in marketing and business. Originally from Pakistan, she brings global perspective and resilience to her studies after relocating to the U.S. in 2023. Mehak plans to transfer to a four-year university to study marketing and international relations, followed by an MBA. Her goal is to lead sustainable, inclusive fashion marketing. She's active in campus organizations and Model UN, and founded Taameer-e-Milat, an NGO mentoring young women in Pakistan. Mehak blends leadership, empathy and multicultural insight to drive meaningful social and global impact.



Jeremiah Somerville

Jeremiah Somerville is a liberal arts student at Harper College, planning to transfer to UIC for a political science degree and attend law school to become a constitutional attorney. Passionate about justice and equality, he aims to defend the rights of underserved communities. A former All-Conference athlete and team captain, he gained leadership and discipline through sports. He's active in the National Honor Society, Debate Club and Multicultural Student Association. Jeremiah also serves his community through his church's Life Changers program, delivering meals and essentials—experiences that shaped his commitment to advocacy and being a voice for the voiceless.

Updates from HOPE

Alumni



Maria Tovar

Maria Tovar, an immigrant from Venezuela and daughter of a single mother, is pursuing an Associate in Applied Science in Nursing at Harper College, with plans to graduate in 2026. Inspired by a family medical emergency, she aims to become a compassionate, quick-acting nurse. Maria is active on campus, serving on the Latinos Unidos board, and is a member of the Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa, and GLIDE. She also volunteers at Willow Creek Church. After Harper, she plans to earn a BSN at UIC and pursue a Master's in Nursing Education to combine caregiving with teaching future nurses.



Natalia VonderHeide

Natalia VonderHeide is a Radiologic Technology student at Harper College with aspirations to become a radiologic technologist and pursue a bachelor's in diagnostic medicine. Passionate about healthcare and education, she aims to contribute both clinically and through teaching. A mental health advocate, Natalia co-founded Hope Squad and now serves as head of marketing for the McHenry County Suicide Prevention Task Force. She's also volunteered to support the houseless and reduce food waste. At Harper, Natalia is active in the Rad Tech Club and completing clinical training at St. Alexius Medical Center, driven to make a meaningful impact in healthcare.

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Sol Akinola

After finishing my bachelor's degree, I was fortunate enough to land a job at a start-up in the heart of Paris. I began as a Communications Intern, closely shadowing the Director of Communications, and later transitioned to a Community Manager. The next chapter of life in Paris will be the pursuit of a master's degree in international business in the fall of 2025. The HOPE scholarship allowed me to bring to fruition the life I dreamed of while attending Harper College, and I am thrilled to know that the scholarship continues to grow.



Emily Alvia

Hi HOPE Giving Circle! It has been an eventful past year! This past May I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering with highest honors. I also am so grateful to have received the C.S. Larson Transfer Award, which is awarded to three students in the Grainger College of Engineering. Now, I am working as a Hardware Engineer at Northrop Grumman and I'm looking forward to participating in their high school mentorship program! Thank you for all of your support and for investing in me, I could not be where I am today without this community.



Lydia Schultz

Hi HOPE members! I recently returned from Madrid where I was an English language teaching assistant for nine months for a program called NALCAP, run by the Embassy of Spain. Living abroad was an incredible experience. Besides making lifelong memories, I learned and grew a lot in the process. My next dream is living in Hawaii, my favorite place in the world, and I am excited to embark on this next adventure by September. My dream of living abroad was fulfilled largely thanks to the support I received as an alumni of HOPE — thank you to you all!



JOIN THE HOPE GIVING CIRCLE

Membership: Begins with a minimum annual gift or pledge of \$1,000.

Supporter: Begins with a minimum annual gift or pledge of \$250.

100% of your donation is tax deductible and will be directed to the HOPE Scholarship Fund.

Are you 70 1/2 or older? Consider making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) to support HOPE students.

Contact information below.

To join or learn more, visit harpercollege.edu/hope or contact Kristyn Meyer at 847.925.6468 or kmeyer@harpercollege.edu

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Event sponsorships help underwrite the cost of these events so that **100%** of member donations can go toward scholarships.

Please contact Kristyn Meyer at 847.925.6468 or kmeyer@harpercollege.edu for more information.

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