BLACK ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

2026 AWARDS LUNCHEON

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8TH 2026
LE NOUVEL HOTEL, 1740 RENÉ-LÉVESQUE OUEST, MONTREAL, QC H3H 1R3



HISTORY

The Black Academic Scholarship Fund (BASF) is a non-profit organization which was founded in 1991 and exists to provide financial assistance to students from the Black Community who are in the process of acquiring an education in any area of study from an accredited institution; and to provide career advice, mentoring and counselling services. **To date, BASF has awarded over 300 scholarships with funds donated by supporters as well as from fundraising activities.**

The BASF collaborates with other organizations to identify internships and networking opportunities for alumni. BASF alumni have not only distinguished themselves in their professions, they have also actively contributed to the greater good through philanthropic and advocacy activities.

The Jackie Robinson International Golf Tournament is one of the major activities hosted by BASF annually to raise funds for the scholarship program. **Additionally, our sponsors have played a principal role in our ability to offer a wide variety of scholarships for the past 34 years.**

MISSION

The Black Academic Scholarship Fund (BASF) exists to provide financial support, showcase talent, and provide resources to students in the Black Community. We believe that everyone in society benefits when we foster and nurture young potential.

2026 AWARDS LUNCHEON PROGRAM

12:30 - 12:45 PM

WELCOME
Nicole, President BASF

12:45 - 1:45 PM

LUNCH
Networking

1:45 - 2:45 PM

AWARDS
Scholarship Recipients

2:45 - 3:00 PM

CLOSING REMARKS
Raffle

info@basfund.ca | basfund.ca

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As President of the Black Academic Scholarship Fund, it is my great privilege to welcome you to our Annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon.

This year is particularly meaningful for our organization. We gather not only to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our scholarship recipients, but also to honour the legacy of one of our beloved co-founders, Theresa Gayle Benedek, whose passing earlier this year marked the end of an extraordinary chapter in our history. Alongside my mother, Sylvia Piggott, Theresa helped establish BASF more than three decades ago with a simple but powerful belief: that education has the power to transform lives, families, and communities for generations.

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Theresa experienced her wisdom, generosity, integrity, and unwavering commitment to helping others succeed. Throughout her distinguished career in finance, including her many years as a trusted financial leader at Steinberg's, she demonstrated excellence, perseverance, and service. More importantly, she served as a role model for countless young Black professionals, particularly young women aspiring to careers in business and finance.

To ensure that her remarkable contributions continue to inspire future generations, BASF is proud to introduce the **Theresa Benedek Memorial Scholarship**. Together with the **Sylvia Piggott Memorial Scholarship**, this award will honour two extraordinary women whose vision, leadership, and commitment to educational opportunity continue to guide our mission.

Today, we celebrate the achievements of our scholarship recipients. Your dedication, resilience, and commitment to excellence remind us why BASF exists. You are the living proof that investing in education changes lives and that the future of our community is bright.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I extend sincere thanks to our donors, sponsors, volunteers, alumni, and supporters. Your generosity allows us to continue opening doors and creating opportunities for talented students across our community.

As we look ahead, we remain guided by the same values that inspired our founders over thirty years ago: excellence, service, community, and the belief that every student deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate our scholars, honour our legacy, and invest in the leaders of tomorrow.

NICOLE PIGGOTT
President Black Academic Scholarship Fund

BOARD MEMBERS



NICOLE PIGGOTT
President

Nicole Piggott, founder of Synclusiv, has dedicated her career to fostering inclusive workplaces. She has held leadership roles at Women in Governance (WiG), Bombardier Aerospace, RioTinto, IOCC, and FedEx Canada. Notably, she negotiated the first partnership agreements between IOCC and Indigenous communities. At WiG, Nicole played a key role in developing the Gender Parity Certification, incorporating intersectionality in the assessment.

Since launching Synclusiv in 2021, the company has rapidly grown, shaping EDI strategies for top Canadian companies. In addition to the BASF, Nicole also serves on several boards, such as Impact (formerly Partnership Africa Canada) and the National Safety Council, and has guest lectured at major international conferences and universities across North America.

Nathalie Perreault is the founder of NPC Consultants inc., an HR consulting firm dedicated to helping organizations and individuals unlock their full potential through strategic talent solutions and personalized coaching. With a strong foundation in business development from her years in the financial services industry, she brings a unique blend of analytical insight and people-focused strategy to every engagement.

A firm believer in access to education for all, she champions initiatives that support lifelong learning and equitable opportunities in the workplace. Passionate about empowering growth, she partners with clients to build thriving cultures and resilient leadership teams.



NATHALIE PERREAULT
Chair of Scholarship Program



GABRIELLE PIGGOTT
Chair of Marketing & Outreach

Gabrielle Piggott is a Manager of Marketing and Consultancy at Synclusiv, where she contributes to all aspects of the business from product design and marketing to business development client support on DE&I initiatives. With a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist, and Social Justice Studies and minors in Art History and Communication Studies, Gabrielle is a passionate advocate for diverse and intersectional representation in both her professional and personal life.

Her dedication to equity and social justice has fuelled her involvement with non-profit organizations, including the Black Academic Scholarship Fund, Groupe Intervention Vidéo, and Apathy is Boring. At Synclusiv, Gabrielle also manages communication and marketing efforts, playing a key role in branding, "The Sync" newsletter, and enhancing the company's social media presence.

2026 BASF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

THERESA BENEDEK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Ra'anaa Taminah Ekundayo

Concordia University

Ra'anaa Yaminah Ekundayo is a PhD Candidate in Art History at Concordia University, studying under Dr. Joana Joachim and continuing a lineage of Black femme art historians in the city that began with Dr. Charmaine Nelson. Having begun doctoral studies in fall 2021, Ra'anaa enters what is expected to be the final year of the program in September 2026.

While living in Sudbury, Ra'anaa helped build a thriving Black arts scene in a city where Black people make up less than 1% of the population, creating alongside a chosen family of artists, activists, and academics through the pandemic and the 2020 uprisings. Ra'anaa's doctoral research seeks to archive this movement, its art, activism, and resilience, on the community's own terms.

As a former sessional instructor, Ra'anaa designed a course centring Black, Indigenous, and queer perspectives in design, and is committed to breaking down the colonial, financial, and structural barriers that keep marginalized communities from accessing galleries, museums, and academic arts spaces.

BEIERSDORF SCHOLARSHIP

Enila Kiniffo

Université de Montréal

Enila est étudiante au doctorat en pharmacie à l'Université de Montréal, où elle concilie ses études avec un emploi à temps partiel en pharmacie communautaire. Elle aspire à devenir pharmacienne en milieu hospitalier et souhaite poursuivre une maîtrise en pharmacothérapie avancée, avec l'objectif de contribuer à un système de santé plus inclusif et représentatif.

L'engagement d'Enila envers la promotion de la diversité remonte au secondaire. Elle a participé au documentaire Vous pouvez rêver, diffusé par Radio-Canada, qui souligne l'importance de la représentation pour la jeunesse noire. Elle a également créé le site Web 7 Merveilles d'Afrique, consacré au patrimoine culturel africain, et contribué à la réalisation du documentaire La diversité parmi nous, portant sur le vécu des étudiants issus des minorités racisées.

Depuis novembre 2022, elle est membre de l'Aile Jeunesse de l'Association Médicale des Noirs du Québec (AMNQ), où elle a d'abord occupé le poste de secrétaire avant de devenir représentante de l'Université de Montréal. Dans ce rôle, elle contribue à l'organisation d'activités de mentorat, d'ateliers de sensibilisation dans les écoles et de conférences sur les enjeux de santé touchant les communautés noires. Elle accompagne également des jeunes dans leur processus d'admission universitaire.

2026 BASF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

FONDATION FAMILLE PINEAU SCHOLARSHIP

Ivana Okaro

McGill University

Ivana is a neuroscience student and aspiring physician-neuroscientist who has studied at McGill University and the University of Calgary. Her research explores sildenafil (Viagra) as an adjunct treatment for newborn brain injury, reflecting her belief that solutions often lie in using existing tools in new ways.

At 17, she founded Crowned by Ivana, a business that handcrafts wigs for people with cancer, alopecia, and others. It has served more than 500 clients, and she now carries that work forward as a wig specialist at Montreal's Hope and Cope Cancer Wellness Centre.

A dedicated community builder, Ivana co-launched the Calgary chapter of the Canadian Association for Girls in Science (CAGIS) and co-founded the University of Calgary's first youth-led organization for Black science students, engaging over 200 members. She currently serves as a program coordinator for both CAGIS and the Canadian Black Scientists Network. She has also contributed to policy research and survivor storytelling at the Sagesse Domestic Abuse Prevention Society and taught science to more than 150 underserved youth across Montreal.

FONDATION FAMILLE PINEAU SCHOLARSHIP

Princesse Tsamo

McGill University

Princesse Tsamo is a medical student at McGill University's Faculty of Medicine with an interest in neurosurgery. Born in Cameroon, where her father worked as a community nurse, she immigrated to Canada and attended an under-resourced high school in Quebec. She went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from the Université de Montréal and, after two medical school rejections, was admitted to McGill.

Princesse is the McGill Representative of the Quebec Black Medical Association (QBMA) and Coordinator of its School Outreach Project, leading mentorship and career exploration initiatives in high schools, CEGEPs, and universities across Quebec. She also mentors underrepresented Anglophone students through the McGill Ambassador Program and Pick Your Path, and helped develop a national mentorship initiative through the Canadian Medical Students' Interest Group in Neurosurgery that pairs students with mentors based on shared experiences and identities.

Committed to health equity, she co-founded 1 Donneur Noir, 1 Vie Sauvée, a community initiative that has reached more than 400 people to increase stem cell donor registration among Black communities in partnership with Héma-Québec. As Quebec Lead for a national University of Calgary study on the well-being of Black youth, she helped recruit more than 100 participants, contributing to bilingual publications that bring underrepresented voices into Canadian health research.

2026 BASF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Aliyah Baakoe

McGill University

Aliyah Baakoe is a medical student in the MDCM program at McGill University's Outaouais campus. A first-generation future physician, she entered medical school directly from CEGEP and is a previous recipient of the BASF Beiersdorf Scholarship.

Aliyah's commitment to her community began in high school, where she founded a Black Student Committee and later returned to mentor its members. At CEGEP, she tutored linear algebra and calculus, served on the Student-Athlete Committee, created a Black History Month video initiative, and was named 2024 Women's Athlete of the Year by the Nomads de Montmorency.

At McGill, Aliyah has served as Med-1 Class President, Med-P Representative for the Black Medical Students' Association, Vice-President of Academics for the Med-P/Dent-P Student Association, and IFMSA Campus Coordinator. As Events Director for the Pulse Initiative, she helps organize blood pressure screenings in underserved communities, and she recently led a cardiovascular health outreach event in partnership with several community organizations. She is also actively involved in research and continues to tutor.

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Patricia Tchayim

McGill University

Patricia is a medical student at McGill University, balancing clinical rotations with a deep commitment to community health and mentorship.

Patricia is the Co-Founder and Co-President of WAHI, a community health nonprofit working to improve health literacy and access to care within Black and underserved communities. Patricia also serves as Quebec Regional Director of the Black Medical Students' Association of Canada (BMSAC), supporting mentorship initiatives, community health advocacy, and outreach that encourages the next generation of Black students to pursue careers in medicine.

Guided by the belief that representation in medicine means building pathways for others, Patricia plans to continue mentoring young Black students pursuing medicine throughout and beyond medical training.

2026 BASF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIP

Rahila Haruna

McGill University

Rahila is a competitive sprinter and incoming medical student who begins a medical preparatory year this fall. After initially planning to pursue law, Rahila changed course toward medicine while completing CEGEP, balancing demanding science coursework with athletics and student leadership.

As an executive of the college's Black Student Union, Rahila helped organize a successful Black History Month celebration on campus. As a leader in the Christian Club, Rahila rekindled ties with other colleges, organizing a collaborative event that brought together nearly one hundred students from seven schools. Rahila also coaches young athletes in sprinting.

Looking ahead, Rahila hopes to practise in academic medicine, championing representation and advocating for holistic health and health awareness both within and beyond the hospital. In the long term, Rahila aims to contribute to the revitalization of healthcare in Nigeria.

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Cedric Keutcha Kamani

University of British Columbia | Oxford University

Cedric is a medical graduate of the University of British Columbia who is beginning residency in Montréal while pursuing a master's degree at the Oxford University. Raised by a grandmother in a village in Cameroon, Cedric learned early to value community and to see people fully, a lens that led to medicine and, eventually, to vascular surgery.

In Cameroon, Cedric founded Marie Claire Pharmacare to supply rural health centres with essential medical supplies. At UBC, Cedric co-founded UpSurge, a mentorship program connecting students from underrepresented backgrounds with pathways into surgery, served as VP Finance of the Black Medical Students Association, and, as President of the UBC Surgical Club, built workshops and mentorship pipelines for aspiring surgeons. Through the Patient Experience Project, Cedric also worked to bring patient voices into medical education.

Looking ahead, Cedric hopes to lead projects that reduce barriers and wait times for patients, contribute to research on outcomes in low-resource communities, and continue mentoring the next generation of Black medical trainees.

2026 BASF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

SYLVIA PIGGOTT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Dorine Sibomana

McGill University

Dorine Sibomana is a second-generation Rwandan immigrant and a medical student at McGill University, where she began her studies in 2024. A first-generation physician-in-training, she also works part-time as a nurse.

Through the Black Medical Student Association of McGill, Dorine mentors applicants in the Black Candidate Pathway, guiding them through often unspoken parts of the admissions process such as the CASPer and MMI. Of the five applicants she has mentored, four have been accepted to medical school. She also co-founded UpSurge Montréal with her colleague Bryana, an initiative that introduces underrepresented youth to surgery through workshops in secondary schools and CEGEPs in underserved areas.

Dorine is pursuing research in nephrology under the mentorship of Dr. Rita Suri and has presented at the Canadian Society of Nephrology Annual General Meeting. Her upcoming project will examine patients with acute kidney injury receiving acute dialysis, with the goal of identifying racial inequalities in care and outcomes, particularly for Black and Indigenous communities.

BATSHAW BURSARY

Keimora Bushay-Williams

Dawson College

Keimora is a student in the Social Service Worker program at Dawson College. Driven by the goal of building a stable, independent future, Keimora completed a first year of CEGEP as a full-time student while working five to six days a week, demonstrating remarkable determination and resilience.

In high school, Keimora was involved in sports and dance, earning a Most Improved Player award and performing in the school's dance show. Keimora now looks forward to becoming more involved in the Dawson community by joining a sports team or the dance team, while continuing to grow both personally and academically.

2026 BASF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

BATSHAW BURSARY

Amelia Serena Lynch

Amelia is a CEGEP graduate who begins her first semester of university this fall. Having overcome challenges to graduate from high school and then CEGEP, Amelia credits her perseverance, strong work ethic, and the unwavering support of friends, sisters, teachers, and mentors for helping her reach this milestone.

Amelia is actively involved in her community. In 2025, Amelia took part in an Intergenerational Engagement program at St. Anne's Hospital, connecting with and learning from people of different generations. Through the Ressource Jeunesse program, Amelia also participates in youth community activities such as cooking and skill-building workshops. Driven by a desire to help others, Amelia hopes to use the lessons learned along the way to make a positive difference in the lives of those around her.

2025 RECIPIENTS



Left to right: Wilhelm Pamba, Aliyah Baakoe, Oluwaseunnla Adelusi, Alheri Haruna, Mélissa Délalie Houinsou, Laury Gueyie Noutiamo, Yasmine Elmi, Gloria Mutombo, Amelia Serena Lynch, Cédric Jean.

2025 AWARDS LUNCHEON









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Your support helps us continue a legacy of excellence and opportunity.

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