



RTOERO 2022 scholarships invest in the health of seniors, communities

Toronto, May 30, 2022 – Across Canada, post-secondary students are preparing to make a difference in their areas of study and communities. The RTOERO scholarship program is helping 20 of them to get there.

This year, RTOERO has awarded scholarships valued at \$3,000 each to 20 college and university students who are enrolled in programs that lead to a career in education, environmental stewardship or seniors’ health and well-being.

“We believe in the power of our community to secure a better future. So we are committed to do that for students, each other and seniors in Canada,” says Rich Prophet, chair of the RTOERO.

RTOERO members are encouraged to recommend students for the annual scholarships. To date, RTOERO has awarded scholarships totaling more than \$550,000.

To apply for the scholarships, students had to describe how their studies and goals relate to RTOERO’s purpose, what influenced them to pursue their intended career and how their contributions (to family, school, work, community) have aligned with RTOERO’s goal and values.

This year’s recipients are studying in programs including nursing, medicine, speech-language pathology, social work, health sciences, biomedical engineering, physiotherapy, pharmacy and education. “We look forward to seeing the impact they will make in their chosen fields, and on our collective welfare,” says Prophet.

The full list of the 2022 scholarship recipients:

Recipient	Pursuing	Interest
Taylor Colangeli Niagara Falls, Ont. Nominated from District 14 Niagara	MSc – Speech- Language Pathology, McMaster University	Taylor was inspired to pursue this course of study following her grandmother’s stroke. She aspires to make connections between the dimensions of wellness, and improve patient communication to promote well-being. Taylor has volunteered with the Niagara Region Adult Day Program for seniors with aphasia, and for the Guelph Community Health Centre, helping disadvantaged groups access assistance to appropriate services and resources.

<p>Christine Cowley Greely, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 45 EstaRiO</p>	<p>BScN – Nursing, University of Ottawa</p>	<p>Christine’s immediate goal is to be a community health nurse, with a dual specialty in oncology and palliative care. After that, she’d like to return to school to obtain her nurse practitioner’s license. She is drawn to a holistic, community-centered model of providing care – not for but <i>with</i> seniors, providing them with the agency of their own health and care.</p>
<p>Sarah Eadie Longueuil, Que.</p> <p>Nominated from District 51 Echo</p>	<p>BA – ECEE, Concordia University</p>	<p>Sarah believes children should always be regarded as individuals with intrinsic value, who have the ability to teach as well as learn. In her future career, she’ll teach those under her that the world is full of opportunities to explore and find success, with the child as an active participant who has freedom of choice and discovery. Sarah hopes to incorporate outdoor education and exploration of the environment into the curriculum, and sees the potential for including discussions surrounding Indigenous practices/traditions.</p>
<p>Bob Hanley Coquitlam, B.C.</p> <p>Nominated from District 42 Mainland British Columbia</p>	<p>MA – Healthcare Innovation, Arizona State University</p>	<p>Bob’s academic focus is on the power of lifelong learning to strengthen seniors’ cognitive health, provide meaningful social engagement, and combat the experience of loneliness and isolation. The innovations he’s pursuing in his studies are based on the science of “cognitive reserve”, i.e. the brain’s capacity to withstand the negative effects of injury and disease. This is the latest career shift for Bob, who worked as an investment manager specializing in retirement portfolios for seniors, went back to school to become a registered massage therapist, and ran a wellness company that transformed into a training college around the needs of seniors.</p>
<p>Nathan Hicks North Gower, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 39 Peel</p>	<p>MSW – Social Work, Campbellsville University</p>	<p>Upon graduation, Nathan aims to practice psychotherapy. He notes a consistent theme of loss among many older individuals – the loss of a profession, identity, loved ones, motor function and cognitive abilities. All can contribute to poorer mental health. He says therapy services can be vital to people’s longevity and well-being.</p>

<p>Olivia Ivankovic Winona, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 15 Halton</p>	<p>BHSc – Health Sciences, University of Ottawa</p>	<p>Olivia plans to be a high school teacher, and teach her future students about not only sciences but also about the importance of kindness, living a life of gratitude and being responsible stewards of the Earth. Throughout her studies, she has worked part time at the Martha's Landing Retirement Residence, which has also fueled her commitment to serve others.</p>
<p>Maliha Khan Kollins Toronto, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 16 Toronto</p>	<p>BEng – Integrated Biomedical Engineering and Health Science, McMaster University</p>	<p>Maliha's program focuses on engineering medical design as a way to improve quality of life. In the future, she wants to work as a biomedical engineer who develops medical devices for the elderly. She has a strong interest in the chemical side of engineering, and is intrigued by the idea of researching and developing novel materials for implants.</p>
<p>Alexis Lajambe Bruce Mines, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 3 Algoma</p>	<p>MSc – Physiotherapy, McMaster University</p>	<p>Alexis wants to help all ages with healthy, active living, and educate seniors on how to safely move in their surroundings and do the things they love. After school, Alexis intends to return home to pursue physiotherapy in Northern Ontario, where there's a great need for health care practitioners.</p>
<p>Conor MacLean North Bay, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 15 Halton</p>	<p>BEd – Concurrent Education: Intermediate/Senior, Lakehead University</p>	<p>As an aspiring high school teacher, Conor has the unique opportunity to shape the minds and growth of Canada's youth. His teachable subjects are history and environmental science, and his true passion lies in outdoor education and conservation-based environmental stewardship. Conor taught outdoor education and guided extended wilderness experiences for almost 10 years prior to going to teacher's college.</p>
<p>Geneva Mariotti North York, Ont.</p> <p>Nominated from District 24 Scarborough & East York</p>	<p>BSc (hons) – Psychology, York University</p>	<p>In her program, Geneva is specializing in neuropsychology and aging, with the goal of becoming a researcher. She plans to pursue a Masters and PhD in the field of behavioural neuroscience and psychology, and wants to grow the understanding of healthy and unhealthy aging.</p>
<p>Rebecca McCulligh Toronto, Ont.</p>	<p>MSW – Social Work,</p>	<p>Rebecca's career goals centre around providing a multitude of therapies to seniors</p>

<p>Nominated from District 23 North York</p>	<p>Wilfrid Laurier University</p>	<p>in long-term care. She has done a placement as a student therapist at a community health centre, where over half of her clients were seniors. She says this age group often can feel forgotten, which is why she wants to provide a feeling of inclusion and promote equity within mental health.</p>
<p>Sarah O’Connell Burlington, Ont. Nominated from District 13 Hamilton-Wentworth & Haldimand</p>	<p>BSc – Biomedical Science for Health Professionals, Trent University</p>	<p>Sarah is completing a medical internship at Peterborough Regional Health Centre, and worked in a nursing home throughout the pandemic. Both experiences reinforced her belief that a culture of active and healthy retirees within Canada will improve our quality of life and reduce our health care burden. She aims to go to medical school and eventually practice family medicine or cardiology.</p>
<p>Sarah Prenger Thunder Bay, Ont. Nominated from District 2 Thunder Bay</p>	<p>MCISc – Speech Language Pathology, Western University</p>	<p>Sarah’s interests include stroke rehabilitation, swallowing difficulties and acquired language disorders. She is committed to addressing issues that can cause seniors to lose their sense of community and connection. She places as much importance on quality of life and well-being as on physical health. Sarah wants to return home to start her practice, to help combat the long waitlists and inaccessible health care that many Northern Ontario and Indigenous communities experience.</p>
<p>Natalie Robinson Ridgetown, Ont. Nominated from District 33 Chatham-Kent</p>	<p>BScN – CTF Nursing, Western University</p>	<p>In her program, Natalie has learned much about the many obstacles that seniors can experience when accessing health care, from financial barriers, to access to transportation, to a lack of interventions from medical teams. Once she has completed two years of clinical practice as a registered nurse, Natalie plans to spend an additional two years in school to become a geriatric nurse practitioner (NP) in the rural community of Ridgetown, Ont.</p>
<p>Meghan Secord Puslinch, Ont. Nominated from District 31 Wellington</p>	<p>BHSc (hons) – Health Science, Western University</p>	<p>Studying health science has exposed Meghan to all aspects of health care, with an emphasis on Canada’s aging population. Her courses have examined some challenges that seniors face, such as stigma, ableism, discrimination and abuse.</p>

		Meghan aims to pursue medical school, and is interested in addressing the concerning rise in abuse/neglect of seniors in residential settings. She says society has an obligation to treat seniors with compassion, understanding and expert care.
Emma Sypes Ottawa, Ont. Nominated from District 21 Renfrew	MD – Doctor of Medicine, University of Ottawa	Emma will graduate with an MD in 2024. Her goal is to become a geriatrician, to provide high-quality primary care, and improve access to health care for older adults in rural communities. Growing up with two grandparents as teachers has inspired Emma to, one day, incorporate teaching into her career. She hopes to train future geriatricians by holding a faculty position at a medical school.
Lauren Taylor Oakville, Ont. Nominated from District 39 Peel	BEd – Concurrent Education: Primary/Junior, Brock University	Lauren wants her future students to be their happiest, healthiest selves. As a teacher, she aims to promote more physical activity, encouraging students to get outside, move around, and not be tied down to a desk. Through her passion for inclusion and equity, Lauren has taken numerous elective courses that focus on students with exceptionalities and learning disabilities. She believe all teachers should have that solid understanding, which will ultimately help all students.
Veronica Vuong Toronto, Ont. Nominated from District 34 York Region	PhD – Medical Science (focus: aging and cognitive neuroscience), University of Toronto	Before her current program, Veronica earned a Bachelor’s equivalent in Piano Performance; a BMus in Music Education; and a MA in Music and Health Sciences. It all comes together in her research interest – using neuroimaging methods and behavioural measures to understand how music can improve memory, and potentially induce neuroplasticity in older adults with early dementia. Her goal is to become a professor and direct a research laboratory that focuses on research in music and memory.
Emma Williston Oakville, Ont. Nominated from District 43 Nipissing	Doctorate of Pharmacy, University of Toronto	As a future a pharmacist, Emma is eager to assist seniors in achieving their best possible health outcomes. She says pharmacists have a major role in educating seniors on medication therapy

		management, promoting healthy lifestyles, and ensuring optimal usage and dosage of prescribed medications.
Laurel Wilson Sundridge, Ont. Nominated from District 43 Nipissing	BA – Architectural Studies, University of Toronto	Laurel plans to complement her architectural studies with an additional certificate in the sustainability of the built environment. She is interested in working towards introducing more sustainable and accessible low-income housing within Canada, as well as safe and sustainable seniors' homes and centres. To achieve this, Laurel will be doing research on low-income, single-floor detached homes, and on low-density, apartment-style living. Both designs are meant to be energy efficient, cost-effective, and easy to navigate.

RTOERO is a bilingual trusted voice for healthy, active living in retirement and has 82,000+ members in 51 districts across Canada. RTOERO is the largest national provider of non-profit group health benefits for education community retirees. The organization welcomes members who work in or are retired from the early years, schools and school boards, post-secondary and the broader education sector.

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