



SIR ROBERT JONES

# REFUGEE DAUGHTERS' SCHOLARSHIP

2023

RJH



**RASNZ**  
Refugee health  
& wellbeing

***I am delighted to welcome a new group of young women to our refugee daughters' tertiary education funding scheme.***

***Most have harrowing background stories. While finding a haven in New Zealand provides relief from danger, it is still an alien land with an alien culture and language which confronts these girls at a young age. In many cases they are obliged to effectively become the head of the family dealing with the new order.***

***I wish them all success in their studies and future lives.***

***Sir Robert Jones***

**Cover image: Gracy Tlumang , Bachelor of Pharmacy, University of Otago**



2023 marks the beginning of our ninth year as administrators of the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship; we can hardly believe how time has flown! Since the inception of the scholarship in 2015, the vision has not changed; it exists "to assist young women from refugee backgrounds to complete a university degree or qualification from an approved tertiary institution". Year after year, the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship continues to inspire young refugee-background women to achieve that coveted tertiary qualification. Over 80 scholars have now graduated and many have gone on to postgraduate study. RASNZ is grateful to Sir Robert for his vision of a New Zealand where all members of society can fulfil their educational dreams.

Behind the scenes, many people give their time generously to ensure the scholarship process runs smoothly. We thank Greg Loveridge and Caitlin Venus from Robert Jones Holdings for their unwavering support and guidance. We acknowledge the assistance of Dr Jo Oranje, and Iain McGilchrist, University of Otago, Julija Sardelic, and Prof Sara Kindon, Victoria University of Wellington; Jenni Broom, Arwa Hadi and Zinab Al-Khaleefa.

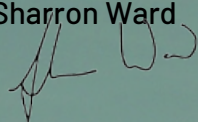
The 50/50 partnerships between Robt. Jones Holdings and our partner universities (Victoria, Waikato, AUT, Otago, Auckland) have been invaluable. Matching the funding for scholarships by 50% has enabled Robt. Jones Holdings to offer more scholarships each year. It also provides a valuable link between RASNZ and our partner universities as we work together to provide the best possible support for the students. We acknowledge Erica Farrelly, University of Auckland, Eman Ghandour, Auckland University of Technology, Kodrean Eashae, Victoria University of Wellington and Dr Jo Oranje, University of Otago for the invaluable support and guidance offered to these young women navigating university life.

I want to extend a huge thank you to Susan Hirst for her ability to balance all aspects of the day-to-day administration of the scholarship, both thoughtfully and meticulously.

You will read many inspiring stories in the 2023 Yearbook. We hope it will provide insight into refugee families' individual challenges when forced to flee their homeland, leaving behind everything familiar and meaningful. Many refugee background young women arrive in Aotearoa with limited formal education and are the first in their families to go on to higher education. They often describe their determination to make the most of every opportunity, make their families proud, and contribute to New Zealand society as their driving force to make the most of their resettlement.

Finally, I would like to congratulate every one of our deserving scholars for their outstanding achievements and wish them the very best for the year ahead.

Sharron Ward



Chief Executive Officer  
RASNZ

# Anab

*"I consider myself fortunate to have this opportunity to build a better future for myself, my family, and the community."*



My name is Anab and I came to New Zealand as a refugee in 2019. I was born in Somalia and was raised there until the age of three. We were among the lucky ones to escape war-torn Somalia on the way to find peace and safety in a better place.

I spent my childhood in Malaysia as a refugee. My mother worked hard so that we could survive and educate ourselves along the way.

We were fortunate to have a supportive mother who encouraged us to pursue our dreams no matter what our circumstances. I am also happy that New Zealand chose for us to make our home here. When we arrived, we were greeted kindly and everything was made simple, such as learning and the involvement of volunteers who assisted us in getting around Auckland.

We are grateful for everything we have, and I hope that one day I will be able to repay those who have provided me with these invaluable possibilities. I am studying a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). It has always been my dream to study something I love and enjoy. My goal is to complete my degree and be able to give back to New Zealand, and I would love to volunteer to help other refugee families the same way we were shown support and kindness.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Sir Robert Jones, RASNZ, AUT and everyone involved in organising this scholarship for young refugee girls. I consider myself fortunate to have this opportunity to build a better future for myself, my family, and the community.



# Anastasia

*"The scholarship enables me to lay a good foundation so that I can move forward and make a positive impact to other people's lives."*



I consider myself fortunate to have this opportunity to build a better future for myself, my family, and the community.

I have completed Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health at AUT previously. This has developed some great skills and has set me up for a good foundation for my future studies. However, I wanted to go further and take a slightly different approach to help people's lives.

I wanted to pursue medicine for as long as I could remember. It is not only a degree where I can manifest and broaden my interest in science, human body and working with people. It is through this course in which I can help communities, solve complex problems. It will allow me to use my talents and develop new skills to be of maximum benefit to communities and people in need at the time they are vulnerable. I feel blessed to be given the opportunity to study Bachelor of Medicine at the University of Otago.

I thank everyone involved in the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship. Thank you for your outstanding support. The difference you make is immense. It lifts the financial burden and allows me to focus on my future. The scholarship enabled me to feel secure and not to be worried that I would not be able to afford the degree of my dreams. The scholarship enables me to lay a good foundation so that I can move forward and make a positive impact to other people's lives. I am very grateful for this investment into my future.

# Dewa

*"I know problems are not STOP signs but guidelines."*



Kia ora, my name is Dewa. First, I am grateful to be a recipient of Sir Robert Jones' Refugee Daughters' Scholarship. It has changed my life. It is a powerful motivator for me to work harder and repay my thanks by excelling in my field of study.

I am originally from Afghanistan. I arrived in New Zealand at the end of 2019. I am a second year Bachelor of Nursing student at Auckland University of Technology, aiming to complete a Master's degree as well. My goal is to become a Nurse Practitioner and

become someone who can help people across the world who are in need and struggling because of their financial needs.

In Afghanistan, my life was filled with joy and dreams, excitement, love, and sad moments too. Experiencing being a female in a nation like Afghanistan is extremely difficult, even if you have a supportive family. However, some challenging outside environments make you realise that life is difficult in a country like Afghanistan. I remembered the nights when I could not sleep and stayed awake until morning and the days when I was incredibly thrilled and getting ready to go to school, but I also recall the social challenges on the road. But all those moments didn't make me give up, even though those moments created much fear; I followed my wishes and did not give up. I promised to answer all those people with negative minds with my pen and my knowledge; I know problems are not STOP signs but guidelines. Long story short, our family was experiencing security issues due to our political background, and we ultimately decided to leave the country.

I thank everyone involved in the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship. Thank you for your outstanding support. The difference you make is immense. It lifts the financial burden and allows me to focus on my future. The scholarship enabled me to feel secure and not to be worried that I would not be able to afford the degree of my dreams. The scholarship enables me to lay a good foundation so that I can move forward and make a positive impact to other people's lives. I am very grateful for this investment into my future.



# Fatima

*"One of the most important things that my dad taught us was to reach our capacities with nothing stopping us."*



Kia ora, my name is Fatima. I was born in Mashhad, Iran, but my background is Afghan.

My parents left the country they called home as it was no longer safe for us to live in. It's been about 11 years since my parents decided upon a journey with hopes of a better future for their children. This journey included us living in Indonesia for several years until our case got accepted by New Zealand and we moved here. Starting a new life in New Zealand was very challenging at first as I couldn't speak a word of English and there were many cultural shocks.

Growing up I found a passion for education thanks to two people in my life. My father and my sister. One of the most important things that my dad taught us was to reach our capacities with nothing stopping us, which is why he decided to leave the place that he knew all his life, supporting us from a young age. I had always known how intelligent of a student my sister was, but after I grew up, I truly understood how much hard work she had put into the life that she had built for herself. It inspired me to do the same.

After studying Health Science First Year last year, I am now studying towards Physiology at University of Otago.

I am very grateful to be a recipient of this scholarship. Thank you to Sir Robert Jones for giving me the opportunity and giving me the chance to follow education. Nga mihi nui.

# Hind

*"I believe that sometimes you lose something great to gain something greater, like my gain of this scholarship."*



As-salamu alaykum, kia ora, and hello, my name is Hind and I am originally from Palestine, but I have never felt its sunshine on me, as my identity is fragmented across many countries. Due to the Israeli occupation of my beautiful country, my grandparents were forced to flee to the nearby country of Iraq, where I was born.

The search for a place to call home was arduous. My whanau and I were constantly moving across six countries, for eighteen years. With every migration, we had to start

a new life all over again, losing everything each time, causing us to struggle severely financially. At the age of fourteen I had to drop out of school and work full time for four years to support my family. I had a strong faith that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and this light finally shone the moment we received a call from the Aotearoa embassy in Thailand stating that my family and I were accepted to be part of this beautiful country, a country to call home.

I started high school at the age of eighteen to pursue my dreams as I have always dreamed of working in the healthcare sector and helping people. The start of my dream began when I started studying Health Science First Year at the University of Otago. I was then fortunate to be offered places in different health professional courses, but chose the closest to my heart, which is studying Pharmacy and becoming a Pharmacist.

I believe that sometimes you lose something great to gain something greater, like my gain of this scholarship. I am forever thankful to RASNZ that I am a recipient of this scholarship, and its impact on this new chapter of my tertiary journey cannot be overstated.



# Jannawie

*"I am truly grateful to have received the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship to financially support my educational journey."*



Kia ora, my name is Jannawie, and this is my second year studying Bachelor of Food Science at Lincoln University. I am really looking forward to what's in store for this year.

I was born in Nepal, but my family is originally from Bhutan. Due to the 'ethnic cleansing' propaganda by the Bhutanese government in 1990, my family were forced to leave the country and seek asylum in Nepal.

When I was 11-years old, my family was provided with the opportunity to settle here in New Zealand. That came with its own challenges, the language barrier being the main one.

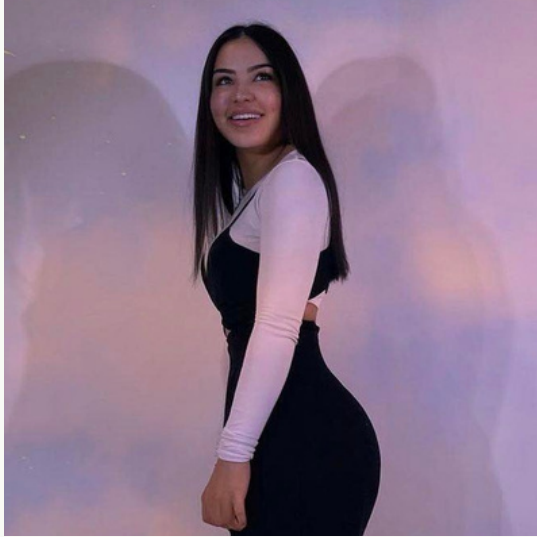
Over time, my family has adapted to living in a foreign country and we have called Nelson our home since 2009. My parents have always tried to provide a good life for me and my younger brother. That included encouraging us to pursue higher education, even though they themselves did not have that opportunity.

Due to financial hardship, I was not able to start tertiary education right after finishing high school in 2016. I had been working for 5 years but the quest to study at tertiary level never went away. That is the reason I decided to enrol at Lincoln University last year, to pursue furthering my education. Both of my parents work part-time jobs, so it is difficult for them to support me financially.

Therefore, I am truly grateful to have received the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship to financially support my educational journey. This enables me to solely focus on my studies without having to worry about financial stress. This scholarship has provided financial support to former refugee students before me and hope it will continue to help others after me.

# Karen

***"One of my biggest goals is to design and build my own homeless shelter to help those in need."***



Kia ora, my name is Karen and I am originally from Choco Colombia. My family and I had to move from the small bakery my dad had, due to conflict between the Paramilitaries and Guerilla that struck in La Hormiga Putumayo where we were located. Due to this happening, we had to flee as we got death threats.

It wasn't easy to escape as fear was our greatest enemy because if we were to get caught there would be no tomorrow. My mother and father overcame this feeling of

fear for the sake of us, we had to move there was no other option or choice. We were on the move and managed to get out and sneak off to the forest where our long journey began. My dad had planned to cross the borders that divide Colombia and Ecuador, but to cross the border, we had to walk for days.

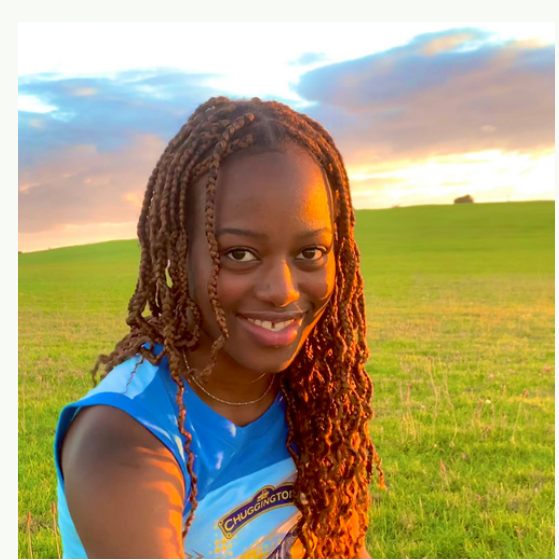
When we arrived at our destination we went straight to La Acnur and told them our situation. They blessed us with an opportunity to come to New Zealand. We struggled a lot in Ecuador from having no food to eat to having nowhere to sleep. I saw a lot of struggles when we were on the streets, and this opened me to a passion to help others in need. I am currently studying at Victoria University (BAS) Architecture. One of my biggest goals is to design and build my own homeless shelter to help those in need.

I am grateful to be blessed with the Sir Robert Jones Refugee Daughters Scholarship. I just want to say thank you for this opportunity, one opportunity I would never have had if I was still back in my country, which is the chance to study.



# Keviné

*"Failure is the key to success."*



"Failure is the key to success." I used to only understand this in a physical sense, but now I recognize it also applies to overcoming mental failures. It's easier to stay down after a mental failure but getting up is crucial for progress and growth.

Here's where my story begins: My name is Keviné. My family and I came to New Zealand as refugees in search of a better life. Although difficult, we adapted by supporting each other and balancing responsibilities.

Growing up, my mother always stressed the importance of education, as she never had the opportunity to receive it. However, in my first semester of university, I faced some difficulties. To briefly summarize, I failed twice, which was discouraging. But, through support from family and friends, I stayed motivated and managed to work my way back onto the right path. Right now, as the new year begins, I will be starting my fourth semester of the Bachelor of Nursing program.

This year, I'm eager to explore various nursing areas and their impact on individuals. My goal is to gain a deeper understanding and determine areas of interest in preparation for when I reach my aspiration of becoming a Registered Nurse.

Although the journey was not easy, I believe the lessons I encountered from failure were fundamental to my current success. What once made me feel disappointed, ashamed, and discouraged is now a part of my identity. It has taught me to appreciate all the different outcomes in a situation. I am beyond grateful to be a recipient of the Sir Robert Jones' Refugee Daughters' Scholarship. This scholarship will greatly impact my academic journey and future aspirations, and I am deeply grateful to Sir Robert Jones and the individuals at RASNZ the refugee mental health and wellbeing organization for their support.

# Mahdieh

*"I learn from the past to make up for my future thus the language barrier ...etc, were not the excuse to give up on my ambitions."*



Kia ora, my name is Mahdieh, an Afghan refugee girl, born and raised in Iran. As an immigrant individual in Iran, having a tertiary education was impossible which denied my entry into careers that required higher education, no matter how much of a passion I held to pursue a successful career. Therefore, a bright future was just a dream for me until I was fortunate to call New Zealand my new home. Although this meant that I had to restart my life from a new page, this was still part of my journey. I learn from the past to make up for my future, thus the language

barrier, the differences in the education system, lifestyle etc, were not the excuse to give up on my ambitions. Proudly, I managed to gain NCEA excellence endorsement over all three-year levels and was acknowledged as the runner-up academic student at my school

From my experience in the past, I have been conscious of the effect of poor oral health leading to problems including gum disease and tooth decay which consequently affect the quality of life. With New Zealand's great health system, I can appreciate the significance of oral health, especially for underage patients which only reinforces the certainty I have for pursuing a future in the field of dentistry and to study Bachelor of Oral Health at University of Otago.

By achieving my goals, I can add to the diversity of oral health therapists, as there is a growing number of refugees, particularly Afghans in Aotearoa. Throughout my journey in New Zealand, many individuals and groups helped me to get to where I am currently. So, I don't want to break this chain and hope to be able to give back to my community and wider society in Aotearoa.

Thank you to RASNZ for providing this amazing opportunity and selecting me as a recipient of the Sir Robert Jones' Scholarship.



# Maryam

*"I always wanted to finish my studies and help people in my society to reach their dreams."*



I am Maryam and I was born in Iran in 2001. I grew up in my home country, Afghanistan. I did my primary studies in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. As a woman, I must follow all the restricted rules such as that girls are not allowed to go to school and study. With all such difficulties I never gave up on reaching my goals - I always wanted to finish my studies and help people in my society to reach their dreams.

The situation in Kabul was getting worse and worse with no security at all but fortunately,

my aunt was already in New Zealand and helped us to get here.

Coming to New Zealand opened new doors of opportunities for me. I started studying at Freyberg High School in 2020 as a year-12 student. At first, it was very difficult because English was my second language and I found it difficult to communicate.

As time passed, I became used to the school area and found friendly teachers. Studying at Freyberg High School was a great pleasure for me because I learned a lot in two years' time. I graduated from Freyberg High School in December 2021.

Currently, I am studying Bachelor of Business, majoring in Economics at Massey University, Palmerston North. I look forward to completing my degree and working as an Economist.

Economics is the Major I really like and have found myself good at it. My aim is to finish studying to help people and to do my best for New Zealanders.

Thank you once again RASNZ and Sir Robert Jones for giving me a chance to achieve my goals.

# Naomi

*"In the end, it is best to pursue my own passion and it has yielded promising results."*



Kia Ora and Mingalabar, my name is Naomi and I am currently studying the third year of BE(Hons) at Victoria University of Wellington. Becoming a University student in New Zealand, and studying to be a Software Engineer is something I never could even have dreamt of.

I was born in Myanmar and had to leave in 2014 due to the ongoing internal conflicts within the country which affected my family. We stayed in Malaysia for almost 3 years and arrived in New Zealand as refugees in July 2016.

Trying to fit into a foreign culture was challenging: the language barrier, cultural shock and my lack of social skills. Despite the challenges, I am so glad to be in a country full of opportunities, and the freedom to choose my own path. I finally had a chance for higher education – something we could never have afforded in my country, and I wanted to make the most of it.

My parents wanted me to pursue medicine but I found my passion in technology which essentially crushed their dreams. In the end, it is best to pursue my own passion and it has yielded promising results.

For someone coming from a third-world country where good education costs a fortune, I am so grateful to be in New Zealand where money doesn't limit a person's potential. I cannot be grateful enough for the generosity of people who've been supporting me up to this point, and for this Sir Robert Jones Scholarship. It has lifted a huge financial burden off my shoulders.

With all the help that I've received, I intend to demand and create a safe space, to encourage more young, ethnic women to explore outside of what's expected of them, and to be the best Engineer that I can be.

# Narges

*"My dream has always been to become an engineer, so when I finished school it felt like that dream was out of reach."*



Kia ora, my name is Narges, and I am honoured to be one of the recipients of Sir Robert Jones' Refugee Daughters Scholarship.

I am originally from Afghanistan, but I was born in Iran. Life as a refugee is incredibly difficult and full of challenges; it's something I never chose; it was brought on me by war. All of the hardships I've faced in my life have shaped me into the person I am today and made me appreciate peace and life even more. I made my way to New Zealand in 2021.

My dream has always been to become an engineer, so when I finished school it felt like that dream was out of reach - especially since it was not something I could do in Iran. Since coming to New Zealand, I have had the pleasure of meeting some amazing people who have been incredibly supportive and encouraging. This has further motivated me to pursue my aspirations, and I am currently studying Building Science at Victoria University in Wellington.

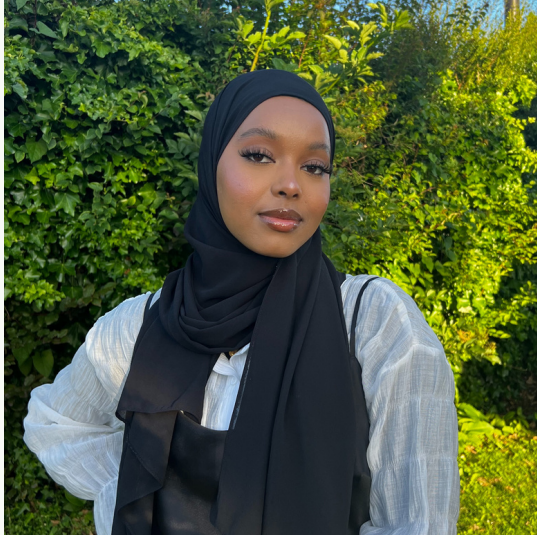
This scholarship is a huge opportunity for me to finally pursue the field that I am passionate about. It means even more to me knowing that many girls from my homeland are deprived of education; and women from the place where I was born are fighting for their rights - so this scholarship is like a double blessing!

I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation to Sir Robert Jones for supporting me and other young women students. This scholarship gives young women refugees an opportunity to break down barriers and achieve their educational goals, and in return, can lead to a brighter future for them and their communities. I will make sure to use this opportunity to bring positive change and contribute to my community.



# Nasteho

*"I want a career that is centered around people and making meaningful connections and impacts, through hard work and determination."*



Kia ora, my name is Nasteho, I am 22-years old from Somalia. I feel honoured to be amongst these resilient young women, fortunate enough to receive the Sir Robert Jones scholarship. I am a social work student at Ara Institute, Christchurch.

I was born in Somalia, but I was raised in a refugee camp in Kenya. I was in the refugee camp for 9 years. Back in 2007 my mother decided to flee from the ongoing war in Somalia to Kenya for better safety and education. I was lucky enough to attend school in Kenya. I was able to learn English at school and that helped

me a lot when we arrived in New Zealand back in 2016. My mother has always encouraged us to aim high when it comes to educational goals.

After graduating from high school, I wasn't sure what I should pursue. Social work seemed to be the ideal career for me because I have always had a passion for helping people. I want a career that is centered around people and making meaningful connections and impacts, through hard work and determination.

I want to express my gratitude to Sir Robert Jones, RASNZ, and everyone else who helped make this scholarship for young refugee girls possible. I am honoured and thankful to have this chance to build a better future for my family, myself, and the world. Because of this support, I am able to accomplish both my academic and professional objectives. This kindheartedness motivates me to give back to the society and has brought me one step further to my goals. I am wholeheartedly excited about my future and all the opportunities the scholarship offers.

# Noor

*"As I have this scholarship, I can take my first steps towards achieving my educational and career goals in the Oral Health field."*



Kia ora, my name is Noor , and I am originally from Palestine, but I and all my family were born in Iraq as refugees. Since my childhood, I have travelled several times with my family to find a safe place to live and settle in, such as Syria, Cyprus, and Indonesia.

The purpose of our movement to Indonesia was to register with UNHCR as refugees to help us travel to a country that we can call home. So, we struggled a lot before we came to our new home in New Zealand in 2018.

In 2013 when we were In Indonesia we faced exceedingly difficult circumstances, so we couldn't study or work while we stayed in refugee camps for five years there. After we came to New Zealand, I started High School in year 11, despite the education delay of five years. It was not easy at all, but I continued to learn English, study, work hard and strive for my future. I finished NCEA Levels 2 and 3 with Merit endorsements, Excellence awards and UE, which was something that surprised me.

Alhamdulillah, I was offered a place in the Bachelor of Oral Health at the University of Otago for this year, which is something I have always dreamed of. Now, as I have this scholarship, I can take my first steps towards achieving my educational and career goals in the Oral Health field. I want to seize this opportunity to thank Sir Robert Jones, RASNZ and University of Otago for granting me this scholarship. My family and I are so grateful for your support in this journey. With your support, I will be the person who draws beautiful smiles on children's and adults' faces as an Oral Health Therapist, therefore I can give back to the New Zealand community.

Ngā mihi nui

# Ohn

*"The opportunities have now been pinned on my back and it's time to seize it."*



My name is Ohn. I am 20 years old and enrolled at the University of Otago to study Health Science at University of Otago. Being Muslims from the Rohingya minority in Myanmar, our lives were never secure, and we had to deal with a lot of prejudice everywhere. In 2018, my adoptive parents fled from Myanmar in hopes of having a better life. After receiving refugee status approval three years later, they made every effort to get me to New Zealand. In September 2021, during the military coup in the country, I was able to escape from Myanmar.

Last year, I studied the Foundation Certificate programme of the University of Auckland. The first few days at the college were extremely overwhelming with the fear of not fitting into a new environment. Despite that, my entire focus was on improving my language skills and gaining university admission.

Growing up, I endured many hardships, which led me to always do everything with a kind and helpful heart. Additionally, as a science-oriented student, I have always wanted to work in the healthcare sector to help people in need, as well as contributing to the community. The opportunities have now been pinned on my back and it's time to seize it.

As such, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sir Robert Jones and RASNZ for this prestigious scholarship to begin university. I am also thankful to my uncle and aunt, who adopted me since I was young, and for supporting me throughout my life. In the future, I hope to make proud the community and everyone supporting me in this education journey. Through education, I will utilize my skills and knowledge to improve society.



# Rama

*"The best preparation for tomorrow or the future is doing our best today."*



I left Syria when I was 8, then migrated to Lebanon and lived there for almost six years. I came to New Zealand in 2017 with a Lebanese year-9 official exams certificate. I went to Taieri College which is a co-ed school and one of the best schools in Dunedin. There, I learned how to be independent, resilient, patient, hard-working, embracing other cultures, and gained confidence.

Being a migrant in this country can be challenging, adapting to a new environment, new culture and new house.

But what helps us adapt is perseverance, being open minded and having devoted parents that are willing to sacrifice anything for their children's sake. I am Rama and have been offered a place in Pharmacy at University of Otago. Well that is great, the only difference though, is this time I have to do it without my family being around me. I am enthusiastic to start a new journey and do beyond my best to work on this year wholeheartedly.

The best preparation for tomorrow or the future is doing our best today, keeping our well-being balanced is the key for time-management and stress relieving. I have a huge passion and desire in Pharmacy, this comes back to my ultimate love of Chemistry and a willingness to assist other people in need. It is a versatile career and an opportunity to be part of a health care team where making a difference in others' lives and forming strong relationships with patients is the key.

In the grand scheme of things, I like to be busy doing useful things and spending quality time with my family. I am planning to work a part-time job alongside studying Pharmacy, probably working as a bilingual supporter to assist refugees who face educational difficulties. To conclude, the end of our story remains unwritten.

# Rhoda

*"They always tell me that education is the pathway to a brighter future."*



Selam kemeyi wī'ilikumi! Greetings in Tigrinya. I'm Rhoda from Eritrea. I was born in Sudan and have been raised here in Aotearoa since my family and I arrived here as refugees on March 14th, 2008, from Sudan.

I am not ashamed to be a refugee because refugees are the strongest group of people there is.

To be called a refugee is the opposite of an insult; it is a badge of strength, courage, and victory." - Tennessee Office for Refugees

My parents sacrificed everything for my siblings and I to be here and to receive a better life than they were dealt. For this I'm eternally grateful. Their sacrifices and dedication are what got me studying at one of the best universities and receiving this scholarship.

I am studying the Bachelor of Primary Teaching at Auckland University of Technology. Throughout my studies my goals and aspirations have expanded through the support of my professors and those around me. I hope to one day start teaching English back home. I want to help my people grow. A major thing in my family is education. My father and mother both strive incredibly hard for my five brothers and I to be able to get an education. They push us in our studies. They have been my motivation to study, so that I can show them that their efforts are not in vain. They always tell me that education is the pathway to a brighter future. I am driven to study so that I may get an education to honour the aspirations of my parents and to be able to set an example for my younger siblings who I believe have bright futures.

I am honoured to have received this scholarship and extremely grateful for the opportunity to have my story out there.

# Zaina

*"One of my main goals in life is to do something I love, something that would leave a positive impact in others' lives no matter how small."*



Kia ora, my name is Zaina. I am 20 years old and I am a Palestinian born in Iraq. My family and I were forced to move houses and countries due to life threatening events including the civil war in Syria which started in 2011. Life for us was quite difficult as it was very unsafe and essential resources were very scarce. In 2016, we were granted entry to New Zealand. I was 14 at the time and could not understand a word in English. However, I have pushed myself to learn the language while adjusting to the new environment and culture.

One of my main goals in life is to do something I love, something that would leave a positive impact in others' lives no matter how small. Living in New Zealand allowed us access to excellent education which has encouraged me to pursue that goal through studying a Bachelor of Law at AUT. Being a lawyer is the career path I have chosen because it conforms with my passion to help people in need. I am currently in my second year, and I plan on pursuing Criminal Law as a career.

Moving to New Zealand and living here has taught me to be more resilient. Due to certain circumstances I did not get University Entrance after High School. I was quite disappointed in myself, however I never gave up on Law School. I did a Diploma in Business in 2021 in order to get enough credits so I can eventually study Law.

As a recipient of the Sir Robert Jones Scholarship I am beyond grateful, and this is an opportunity not to be taken for granted. This scholarship will further motivate me to try to the best of my abilities to succeed and give back to this generous country and its people.



# Congratulations to our graduates:

**2015 scholars:** Joelle Kusimweray, BNurs, MIT; Jenny John, BCom (Accounting) Victoria; Julyseng Lahpai, BCom (Info Systems & Management) Victoria; Rosy Cinzah, BSc (Hons) (Microbiology & Immunology) Otago; Viyan Basharati, BCom (Marketing & Management) Canterbury; Nasra Said, BHLthSc & PGDip Health Science (Occupational Therapy) AUT; Nimo Mohamed, BHealth Science (Nursing) AUT; Roda Shire, BHealth Science (Occupational Therapy) AUT; Pasawhtee Kuku, MArchitecture (Professional) UNITEC; Arwa Hadi, BMedicine & BSurgery, Auckland; Pyo Pyo Chan, BSc & GradDip (Computing, & Cyber Security) Otago & UNITEC

**2016 scholars:** Naheed Said, BSc (Physiology) Auckland & MBChB, Otago; Fatumata Bah, BHealth Science (Psychology & Business) AUT; Giselle Iradukunda, BA (Political Science & Public Policy) Victoria; Grace Kamundu, BBusiness (Financial Analysis) Auckland; Rahma Siraj, BA (Education & History) Victoria; Juliana Gjo, BInformation Technology, Whitireia Polytechnic; Naziyeh Fayaz, BCom, Auckland; Suleqa Habbad, BMedical Imaging, Ara Institute of Canterbury; Shamsia Askari, BApplied Science (Hons), AUT; Mehria Nouri, BA (Anthropology) Massey; Fartun Hirsi, BSc (Technology), Waikato; Hana Mender, BHealth Science (Nursing) AUT; Sara Chapagai, BNurs, UCOL

**2017 scholars:** Amani Ireng, BNurs, UNITEC; Thi Aung Nyunt, BSc (Conservation & Environmental Science) AUT; Chandra Chhouk, BSc & PGDipSc (Chemistry) Auckland; Khatima Mohammadi, BSc & PGDip (Bioscience) Auckland; Sediqa Mohibi, BCom (Accounting & Finance) Victoria; Aya Metlek, BEng(Hons) (Civil) Waikato; Habiba Safi, BHealth Science (Midwifery) AUT; Nida Fiazi, BA (Creative Writing) Waikato; Ansa Mohamud, BSocial Work, WINTEC; Aishah Oziullah, BSc (Chemistry & Statistics) Auckland; Shekiba Maqsoodi, BBusiness (Human Resources Management & Employment Relations) AUT; Zainab Mohibi BSc (Biomedical Science) Otago; Fatumo Mohamud, BMidwifery WINTEC; Maryam Mohseni, LLB, AUT

**2018 scholars:** Ilham Akhlaqi, BCreative Technologies, AUT; Clench Enoke, BGraphic Design (Hons) Massey; Melika Hassan, BHealth Science (Counselling) AUT; Zainab Kamali, BHealth Science (Nursing) AUT; Kim Van Nguyen BCom (International Business) & MApplied Data Science, Canterbury; Jenny Nguyen, BSc (Anatomy & Physiology) Otago; Samera Omidwar, BPharm, Otago; Pragya Pradhan, BSc (Computer Science) Victoria; Fatima Qadami, LLB, Waikato; Sakina Sarwari, LLB, Waikato; Dina Tesfay, BA (Politics & International Relations) Victoria; Htawee Thin, BCommunication Studies, AUT; Dilukshi Thurairajah, BArchitectural Studies, UNITEC; Usanthini Sasikumar, BSc (Biology & Data Science), Victoria; Ja Seng Aung Lahpai, BSc (Bioscience), Auckland

**2019 scholars:** Alshaima Alsaie, MHealth Sciences (Nutrition & Dietetics) Auckland; Diana Fusha, BSc (Psychology) Auckland; Htoo Paw Thin, BCommunication, Massey; Krishna Ogwaro, BCommunication Studies, AUT; Maha Jaffari, BA (Politics & International Relations) Auckland; Mahdie Karimee, BNurs, Massey; Najiba Muhammad, BNurs, WINTEC; Saraswati Biswa, BApplied Sci (Medical Imaging Technology), UCOL; Yasmine Aqeli, BCom (Accounting, Commercial Law, Economics) Victoria; Zinab Al-Khaleefa, BEngTech (Civil), WINTEC; Tamkeen Saeid, BA/LLB, Auckland; Biak Rin Par, BSc (Pharmacology), Otago; Shookria Rajaiy, BMedicine & BSurgery (with Distinction), Otago

**2020 scholars:** langku Thang, BHealth Science (Midwifery), AUT; Luna Arango, BA (English Lit & Public Policy) & LLB, Victoria; Mahtab Mahjor, BCom (Finance & Economics) Canterbury; Malarini Kukanenthiran, BSc (Physiology) Auckland; Mamata Dahal, BSc (Psychology) Victoria; Sumanti Chhetri, BNurs, UCOL; Noella Niyonzima, BA (Economics & Intl Relations)/LLB, Victoria

**2021 scholars:** Faduma Ismail, BBus (Finance), AUT; Gracy Tlumang, BPharm, Otago; Khadija Mire, BNurs, WINTEC; Narjis Al-Zaidi, MA (International Relations and Political Science), Victoria; Rahaf Almadaid, BBiomedical Science, Otago; Reena Sarwary, BNurs, UCOL; Chanda Sapkota BNursing, Massey; Alma Adam BCom (Accounting & Information Systems) Victoria; Jumana Nahhas BSc (Medicinal Chemistry), Auckland



