



Villa Charities Announces Recipients of 2023 Scholarship Program

Scholarship winners honour Italian culture and heritage

TORONTO – September 20, 2023 – Toronto’s registered charity and non-profit organization Villa Charities is excited to announce the winners of its fourth annual national scholarship program for post-secondary undergraduate and graduate students. The **2023 Villa Charities Scholarship Program** launched in May and was open to students of any heritage who help further Villa Charities’ mission of enriching lives through experiences and services that honour Italian culture and heritage.

“I am thrilled that this year’s scholarship program has received our highest response yet,” said Marco DeVuono, President and CEO, Villa Charities Inc. “Each of the 2023 scholarship recipients submitted heartwarming and impressive essays that clearly expressed the importance of their culture and how they support Villa Charities’ mission. I am proud that we can support these exceptional students in their future academic endeavours.”

The **Villa Charities Scholarship Program** includes a total of 16 scholarships valued at \$60,000. Eight of the sixteen scholarships are awarded through Villa Charities Foundation in support of undergraduate and graduate-level studies in a variety of disciplines. The remaining eight scholarships are awarded through George Brown College in Toronto, in support of students pursuing a degree in Architectural Studies or Culinary Arts. Four students will receive The Villa Charities Renzo Pillon Memorial Scholarship and four students will be the recipient of the Villa Charities Culinary Scholarship, supported in part by The Food Dudes. Since launching the scholarship program in 2020, \$240,000 in scholarships has been awarded to students.

Villa Charities announced the eight winners of their Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarships today.

Villa Charities Undergraduate Student Scholarship Recipients (TLN Media Group Sponsorships)

“We are proud to announce TLN Media Group’s sponsorship of the Villa Charities Undergraduate Scholarship Program,” said Aldo Di Felice, President, TLN Media Group. “This initiative aligns with our commitment to celebrating and promoting multiculturalism. We believe in empowering the next generation of leaders who embrace and further these



principles. By supporting this scholarship program, we aim to contribute to a brighter future where diverse voices and cultural heritage are celebrated."

Four awards of \$2,500 were presented to the following full-time Undergraduate students:

- **Alessia Nicole DiMarzo**, University of Calgary
- **Luca DiPietro**, University of Toronto
- **Jake Paul Karpouzis**, University of Toronto
- **Benjamin Domenic Milone**, McMaster University

Villa Charities Graduate Student Scholarship Recipients (Including the KPMG MSLP Scholarship)

Four awards of \$5,000 were presented to the following full-time Graduate students:

- **Joseph Francesco Bellissimo**, Queen's University
- **Robert Nicolas Giardino**, Yorkville University
- **Maria Jose Munera**, University of Western Ontario
- **Gabrielle Vesia Trépanier**, University of Toronto

These scholarships were awarded by Villa Charities Foundation to students who are registered, full-time students at an accredited college or university, Canadian citizens or have permanent-residence status, and are enrolled for the 2023/2024 academic year. Eligible students were required to demonstrate leadership through community involvement or volunteering, as well as write a submission essay describing how they helped further Villa Charities' mission.

Excerpts from two of the scholarship recipients are included below.

"As a dedicated language instructor, enthusiastic volunteer, event organizer, and passionate advocate for Italian studies, I continue to have the honour of leaving meaningful imprints. By igniting a love for the Italian language, fostering connections, and showcasing the richness of Italian literature and heritage, I have actively recruited dozens of individuals



to get more involved in the Italian community.”

– Alessia Nicole DiMarzo, Undergraduate Scholarship Recipient

“Following in the footsteps of my uncle who was Canada’s first Italian-Canadian Emergency Physician, I have had the incredible opportunity to work in the Emergency room of St. Joseph’s hospital, where we serve hundreds of thousands of patients a year. Being a part of the medical team at a Catholic Hospital in downtown Toronto means the world to me as I get to positively represent Catholic and Italian Values, while pursuing my passion for medicine and helping those that are ill and suffering. Through Villa Charities’ generous support of my medical education, I look forward to continuing the longstanding tradition of Italians in Canada being stewards of their communities and providing service to those in most need.”

– Joseph Francesco Bellissimo, Graduate Scholarship Recipient

The selection and adjudication process were conducted by the Villa Charities Scholarship Awards Selection Committee. Scholarships awarded through Villa Charities Foundation will support the students’ tuition fees for the 2023/2024 academic year.

For more information about the Villa Charities Scholarship Program, please visit villacharities.com/scholarships or contact Lena Ciccotelli, Director of Development, Villa Charities Foundation at 416-789-7011, ext. 321 / lciccotelli@villacharities.com.

There are also opportunities to name a scholarship through sponsoring or alternate funding.

About Villa Charities Inc.

Villa Charities Inc. (VCI) is a registered charity and non-profit organization that enriches lives through experiences and services that honour Italian culture and heritage. For more than 50 years across the GTA, Villa Charities has provided cultural and educational programs and supported culturally sensitive long-term care and independent living apartments for seniors. VCI fulfills their mandate through a broad range of activities, services and facilities, both directly and in conjunction with its affiliates and independent organizations. Affiliates include Columbus Centre and Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery; Villa Colombo Homes for the Aged Inc. in Toronto; Villa Colombo Seniors Centre (Vaughan) Inc. Di Poce Centre; and Italian Canadian Benevolent Seniors Apartments Corporation/Casa



Abruzzo Benevolent Corporation with apartments for independent seniors (Caboto Terrace, Casa Del Zotto and Casa Abruzzo). Each of these organizations is an integral part of the Villa Charities family with separate legal status and its own governance Board. Villa Charities has been certified as a Great Place to Work[®], which recognizes the organization's commitment to creating an inclusive, positive and engaging workplace. For more information visit villacharities.com.

About Villa Charities Foundation

Villa Charities Foundation supports experiences and services that honour Italian culture and heritage. As the charitable arm of Villa Charities, the Foundation provides crucial funding for areas such as senior care, youth services, education and scholarships, cultural programming, and capital needs. For more information, visit villacharities.com/give.

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