

# Supporting Transitions

Sinneave's scholarships and awards support autistic youth transitioning from high school to further educational pursuits. For many, post-secondary education does not feel attainable. The reasons vary, but associated costs are often a barrier.

In 2023,  
Sinneave  
distributed awards  
and scholarships  
to **43 individuals**  
totalling  
**\$40,000.**

For some students, receiving an award or scholarship can be life changing. We are pleased to know that in big and small ways, our scholarships and awards make a difference to every student who receives one. They are often a stepping stone along the path to a larger goal.

## A Perfect Academic Record

A scholarship recipient reached out to share news of his university graduation.

Growing up, Troy did not always feel like post-secondary education was in the cards for him. He did not enjoy school as a child. Though he could not put it in words at the time, he thought school was “negligibly easy.” Early on he found himself in a class for “emergent readers” because assessments did not accurately capture the way he processed information.

In junior high he found something that piqued his interests. “I liked reading food nutrition and ingredient labels,” he says. “So, I thought I might like a career in food science.”

Troy began studying sciences at the University of Alberta in 2019, managing two significant transitions at the same time: moving out and starting post-secondary studies.

Once at university, it did not take him long to discover that he was passionate about cell membranes. In his first year, Troy reached out to Michael Overduin—a biochemistry professor—to express interest in a project on biological codes he was supervising. Under the mentorship of Prof. Overduin, Troy's academic trajectory took off.



“Troy immediately impressed me with his deep fascination with the fundamentals of how biology works,” says the professor. “Troy has generated more manuscripts and publications than any undergraduate student I’ve ever known,” says the Professor, who challenged him to submit his biggest ideas to the top journals. Troy has risen to the challenge, co-authoring nine papers to date. “Having Troy work in my lab has been an absolute delight and makes being a professor very satisfying, I feel like I’ve learned more from him than I could have taught him.”

Troy’s passion and dedication continues to open doors for him. In 2022, he completed a 10-week internship at Rockefeller University in New York. And, upon graduating with his BSc Honours Biochemistry degree this past spring (with a perfect academic record!), he received word that he had been accepted to continue his studies in a doctoral program at Oxford University in the UK, receiving the prestigious Clarendon Scholarship. When selecting Clarendon scholars, Oxford University has one goal in mind: “to choose the best students worldwide, as decided by experts in each student’s field.” That is quite an accolade.

While on the surface it appears that Troy sailed through his undergraduate degree, it has not been without challenges. There have been many opportunities for fear to derail Troy’s path. But neither he—nor his parents—have let it.

Troy admits that he has not always been the type of person to take risks or embrace excitement, but somewhere along the way, he became someone who does. He observes, “Fear comes from [or is a by product of] living an interesting life. So, you can choose fear and excitement, or mundanity and security, or something in between.”

Wise words from a young man who is pursuing his academic and career dreams across the Atlantic Ocean.

