

Lamya Haji Bashar Scholarship. (2017). AURORA PRIZE. Retrieved 19 September 2017, from <https://auroraprize.com/en/aurora/detail/12144/aurora-announces-the-%E2%80%99lamya-haji-bashar-scholarship%E2%80%99>



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LAMYA HAJI BASHAR SCHOLARSHIP

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has announced a new annual scholarship for Yazidi students, established in partnership with renowned Yazidi human rights activist Lamya Haji Bashar. It is the latest addition to the Gratitude Scholarship Program, a \$7 million initiative established in gratitude to the people from countries who offered shelter and food to those displaced by the Armenian Genocide more than a century ago.

The first beneficiary of the 'Lamya Haji Bashar Scholarship' is Aido Khiro Omar, a 18-year-old student from Mosul, Iraq, a city ravaged by violence since 2014. Aido was selected for his academic excellence and ambition to create education opportunities for orphans in Iraq, for whom access to life-enriching learning has been disrupted.

The 'Lamya Haji Bashar Scholarship' will be awarded annually in recognition of Lamya's fight for survival from sexual enslavement by the Islamic State in 2014. Following many failed attempts, Lamya eventually escaped enslavement in 2016 only to be caught in a landmine explosion that left her with extensive injuries. Today, Lamya remains dedicated to her work as a public advocate in Germany, raising awareness for the plight of the Yazidi community around the globe.

"Lamya is a role model for all of us, especially for young people fighting for social justice around the world. She is a shining example of the integrity and dedication that the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative strives to recognize and inspire in young leaders." said Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and the United World College (UWC) in Dilijan. "As UWC Dilijan strives to bring together aspiring young leaders from around the world, the 'Lamya Haji Bashar Scholarship' reminds our students that education can be a force for peace," Vardanyan added.

"This scholarship is the opportunity of a lifetime for young people from my community. I am grateful to the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative for opening the door to a global education that will be transformative for these students who have suffered and overcome profound obstacles," said Lamya Haji Bashar.

Aido will study in the two-year International Baccalaureate program on a full scholarship that includes tuition, accommodation and expenses at UWC Dilijan in Armenia, an international boarding school that hosts students from 82 countries. "Through an experiential learning curriculum that taps energy and idealism, Aido will be provided a platform both to educate his peers on Yazidi culture, ensuring its rich history is not forgotten, and to put gratitude into action so that he may make his dreams a reality for the orphans of Iraq," said Denise Davidson, Head of UWC Dilijan.

Aido will join 10 other young beneficiaries of the 2017 Gratitude Scholarship Program, each of whom has been chosen for their academic potential and social engagement. Together, the 11 students come from Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian Camps in Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Greece, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Iraq. Each is either a refugee or displaced, living in extreme poverty, or living with the loss of a parent or guardian. The scholars will begin their studies in September at one of the 17 UWC schools and colleges around the world.

The Gratitude Scholarship Program is a joint undertaking of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and the Near East Foundation. Over the course of the program, 100 promising students from countries affected by conflict, displacement and poverty will benefit from the opportunity to study at one of the 17 UWC schools and colleges based on four different continents. To-date, 21 young scholars have begun their studies in the UWC College network with support from the Gratitude Scholarship Program.