



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
Nichols Humanitarian Fund

# 2024 Recipients





To the recipients,

Thank you for making service to humanity part of your summer. Your work this summer matters. You will make a difference and the people and the communities that you serve will be better off because of you and your projects. Janice and I are proud of you and our hopes and prayers are with you this summer and always.

With all our gratitude and admiration,

***Ed and Janice Nichols***

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# Introduction

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The Nichols Humanitarian Fund is a companion scholarship fund to the Nichols-Chancellor's Medal. These programs seek to make Vanderbilt students better members of their communities and society in general by supporting their humanitarian activities and bringing speakers to Vanderbilt who embody the best of humanity. For more about the Fund, visit its website or contact Vanderbilt's Office of Experiential Learning and Immersion Vanderbilt.

Thirty-six students received awards in 2024 to work on humanitarian projects during the summer academic break in three U.S. cities and twenty foreign countries.

The projects are in Brooklyn NY, Honolulu HI, Nashville TN, Bolivia, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Honduras, Iceland, India, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia.

The projects include working with less fortunate and disadvantaged children in Ethiopia; increasing access to clean water in Uganda; creating free take-home sensory kits that patients can use to ease their overstimulation during their hospital visits; tutoring high school students in Pakistan in physics and the natural sciences; helping the homeless in Nashville; doing archeological surveys in Chile; developing improved methods to monitor the movement of animal populations in South Africa; beach cleanups in Hawaii; making a solar energy generator for a school in Pakistan; providing counseling and suicide prevention services for young people in Japan; coaching students at an Ethiopian orphanage to build the habit of exercising; designing a Wheelchair Conversion Kit that turns manual wheelchairs into electric ones; reducing food insecurity in Bolivia; creating Vanderbilt Palliative Companions to provide free transportation to people in Nashville seeking to volunteer at assisted living facilities and patient homes; and much more.

Recipients and projects can change after the Recipients Booklet is posted. The Reflection Reports contain the final recipients and projects for the year after all changes and may differ from the Recipients Booklet.



## **BAMLAK AKLILU**

*Medicine, Health, and Society, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

“I am honored to partner with the Wegene Ethiopian Foundation, a non-profit organization close to my roots. My initiative focuses on enhancing the educational offerings of their facility in Addis Ababa. This effort is set to bolster the lives of underprivileged youths by providing them with comprehensive and applied learning opportunities, thus laying a solid academic foundation beyond what is offered in their, oftentimes, under-resourced public schools. In doing so, our goal is to diminish their susceptibility to low-income, informal work by endowing them with valuable skills that pave the way to improved employment options and a better quality of life.”



## **SHANNON ALPTEKIN**

*Biomedical Engineering, '25*

**Hometown: Smithtown, NY**

**Project Location: Uganda & Kenya**

“My 5-week East African service trip begins in Kampala, Uganda with efforts to increase clean water accessibility via extension of a solar-powered water system and continues in Nairobi, Kenya with improvements to healthcare quality and accessibility by assisting local doctors and medical staff. I’m most looking forward to interacting with the local populace, as I am a huge people person! I speculate that the stories and perspectives I’ll hear during my time in these places will be nothing like anything I’ve heard before—truly eye-opening. I strongly feel it’s important to be a force for good.”



## **ESHANI ARUMALLA**

*Molecular and Cellular Biology & Medicine, Health, and Society, '25*

**Hometown: San Jose, CA**

**Project Location: Nashville, TN**

“My overall goal is to ensure that patients seeking a more calming environment during states of unrest or sensory dysregulation can access the support and resources they need. I plan on creating free take-home sensory kits that patients can use to ease their overstimulation during their hospital visits. These kits will be available both in an outpatient (Vanderbilt Children’s Developmental Medicine Clinic) and inpatient manner (VUMC MCE 6 Neurology ICU). My sensory kits offer a start to combat a larger ongoing issue.”



## AARIJ ATIQ

*Electrical and Computer Engineering, '26*

**Hometown: Lahore, Pakistan**

**Project Location: Lahore and Islamabad, Pakistan**

“I am thrilled to join the Pakistan Young Innovative Minds Society (PYIMS) as a mentor and science communicator. In this role, I will guide and support high school students passionate about physics and the natural sciences. My project kicks off with a series of workshops on research methodology. My goal is to cultivate an environment of critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, empowering students to explore their scientific inquiries fully. This service project, running from May to early July, is a unique opportunity to inspire the next generation of innovators and researchers.”



## GABRIELLE BECK

*Neuroscience; English, '26*

**Hometown: Tenafly, NJ**

**Project Location: Nashville, TN**

“I am organizing a spoken word fundraiser for The Contributor, aiming to empower unhoused vendors by providing a platform to share creative writing pieces and curating an anthology of street poetry. I'm excited to showcase the resilience, creativity, and humanity of unhoused individuals through their art and photography, fostering empathy within our community. This work is crucial as it addresses systemic issues of homelessness and marginalization by centering the narratives of those directly affected. By providing a platform for self-expression, we aim to break down barriers and foster a more inclusive society where everyone's voice is valued.



## ADITYA BHATT

*Neuroscience; Economics, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Cambodia**

“My proposed experience is to serve as a health assistant and community outreach worker at Khemara, a local NGO that focuses on women, children, and disadvantaged low-income families in the northern areas of the city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Through my service experience, I hope to expand access to preventative healthcare by increasing the depth and breadth of out-of-hospital services available to community members who cannot routinely access medical care.”



## KAROLINA BISIAK

*Secondary Education; History; Spanish, '25*

**Hometown:** Niles, IL

**Project Location:** Krakow, Poland

“Founded in March 2022, Unbreakable Ukraine is a charitable foundation that runs three K-12 Ukrainian schools, providing refugee children with the comfort of continuing schooling in their native language while in an unfamiliar environment. As a future teacher, I know that schools in particular have power as community centers where needs are addressed. Thus, in my long-term volunteer position at the Krakow school, I will work extensively with administration, providing assistance and a new perspective in necessary tasks and in planning for the new school year, as well as in the summer camp program.”



## OWEN CAI

*Medicine, Health, and Society; Public Policy Studies, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location:** Cambodia

“My proposed experience is to serve as a health assistant and community outreach worker at Khemara, a local NGO that focuses on women, children, and disadvantaged low-income families in the northern areas of the city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Through my service experience, I hope to expand access to preventative healthcare by increasing the depth and breadth of out-of-hospital services available to community members who cannot routinely access basic care. This work matters to me because all of our health systems are interconnected in long-standing processes of colonialism and geopolitics.”



## GRETA CULLIPHER

*Anthropology, '25*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location:** Neltume, Chile

“We will be spending six weeks doing archaeological surveys of the Huilo Huilo Biological Reserve. We will be looking for archaeological sites associated with the indigenous cultures, particularly the Mapuche. Through our archaeological survey as a whole we hope to gain understanding of the complex, integrated ecological systems that exist between Indigenous communities and their lands in southern Chile. Through analyzing the historical impacts of climate change on the Mapuche, we gain valuable information about possible impacts and adaptations in the present and future.”



## **PATRICK DOBRANOWSKI**

*Computer Science, Physics, Mathematics, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: South Africa**

“I will collaborate with Smart Savannahs to develop and deploy improved methods of monitoring movements of animal populations and reporting on the safety of animals in the target parks surrounding Gravelotte, South Africa. Over the course of the next several months, I will be prototyping, improving, deploying, and heavily documenting the creation of a new intelligent sensor employing machine learning and other novel techniques for identifying and tracking animal populations to be easily deployed in future parks and partners.”



## **ELANIL ERDUGRUL**

*Cognitive Studies and Computer Science, '26*

**Hometown: Istanbul, Turkey**

**Project Location: O'ahu, HI**

“This summer, I am embarking on an 8-week journey with Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i, a grassroots non-profit organization located in Honolulu, Hawai'i, combating plastic pollution through beach cleanups and community engagement. My project involves creating The Place Library—a comprehensive database containing cultural, historical, and environmental information about O'ahu's environmentally vulnerable areas. Witnessing the adverse effects of plastic pollution first-hand has motivated me to be part of the solution.”



## **OMMAY FARAH**

*Neuroscience, '25*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Basti Dhup Sari, Pakistan**

“Chiraagh Vocational Training School is the flagship project of Chiraagh. Chiraagh is a non-profit that aims to equip girls with vocational, literacy, and digital skills. Currently, the school lacks and requires a solar energy setup for smooth operations. During the duration of my project, I would be arranging a solar energy setup for the school along with Chiraagh's administration. I would be doing this so that the girls can continue educating themselves without any disturbance.”





## OCHUWA GARUBA

*Public Policy Studies and Law, History, and Society, '26*

**Hometown: Powder Springs, GA**

**Project Location: Kigali, Rwanda**

“This summer, I will be volunteering in Kigali, Rwanda, in partnership with Bridge2Rwanda (B2R) to contribute to impact-driven projects aimed at closing the education gap. By assisting with community-building and leadership development trainings, I aim to collaborate with B2R to enhance English language proficiency and digital literacy among high-achieving, low-income high school students through a structured educational program. I look forward to leveraging intentional community outreach and service to tackle the crisis of literacy and university access while simultaneously preparing the next generation of civic leaders for success in the 21st century.”



## LILY HOFSTETTER

*Cognitive Studies and Computer Science, '26*

**Hometown: San Diego, CA**

**Project Location: Japan**

“This summer, I will be working with TELL Japan, a non-profit organization that provides counseling and suicide prevention services, to engage in youth-focused mental health advocacy and outreach initiatives. As the sole mental health services organization in Japan specifically serving the English-speaking population, TELL Japan plays a vital role in supporting overseas and immigrant communities. Ultimately, this project aims to increase access to mental health support for international youth in Japan and contribute to the collective goal of destigmatizing mental health issues as a whole.”



## HUNDAOL HULUKA

*Biomedical Engineering, '26*

**Hometown: Alemgena, Sebeta, Ethiopia**

**Project Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

“This project seeks to coach students in the orphanage to build the habit of exercising using tools such as bicycles, jumping ropes, hula hoops, yoga balls, volleyballs, and soccer balls. By integrating these tools, exercising can become an enjoyable daily part of their routine. Through this service project, my goal is to immerse myself in the experiences of diabetic patients, learning about their struggles and needs. This firsthand understanding will enable me to bridge the gap between theoretical solutions I've encountered in my research at Vanderbilt and the real-life challenges faced by my community.”



## RINCON JAGARLAMUDI

*Biochemistry & Chemical Biology, '25*

**Hometown: St. Louis, MO**

**Project Location: Nashville, TN**

“Through Hip Hop Public Health, I intend to harness the transformative power of music, art, culture, and science to show young people the importance of health and healing. For my service project, I will be creating a "Summer Remix" of our traditional lesson toolkit that is tailored for the youth summer camp audience. I intend to collaborate with local partners like AAOC Camps for Youth Development, Youth Engagement Services, and Nashville Metro Parks. My goal is for this experience to prepare me to utilize my platform in healthcare to empower entire communities and dismantle systemic barriers to health equity.”



## ANKIT JANAMANCHI

*Applied Math, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

“I wish to aid underprivileged entrepreneurs in the city of Phnom Penh in earning a livable wage in collaboration with ProjectsAbroad. I would utilize the skills I’ve built learning the fundamentals of finance at Vanderbilt and working with a Private Equity search fund last Summer to bring my business management and investing skills to this program. I would cherish the opportunity to use the Nichols Humanitarian fund to allow me to travel to Cambodia and help underprivileged and underbanked communities build wealth and work towards financial independence. “



## FERHAN JEMAL

*Engineering Science, '26*

**Hometown: Alexandria, VA**

**Project Location: Nashville, TN**

“For my service project, I will introduce a Wheelchair Conversion Kit that turns manual wheelchairs into electric ones. This project is important to me because it combines my passion for engineering with my desire to help others, especially veterans who have mobility challenges. What I'm really looking forward to is seeing the difference this makes in their lives. It's more than just a technical project for me; it's about giving back freedom and independence to those who have given so much for us. Through this project, I hope to learn more about the challenges veterans face and how we can address them with innovative solutions.”



## GRACE JONES

*Engineering Science, Chemistry, and Mathematics, '25*

**Hometown: Knoxville, TN**

**Project Location: Cochabamba, Bolivia**

“For my project, I have the incredible opportunity to work with Mano a Mano International in Cochabamba, Bolivia, at their Center for Ecological Agriculture. My project has three main components building off my work last summer with them. To me, this organization epitomizes meaningful service through their intentionality and community-driven model. I cannot wait to return to the incredible team at Mano a Mano and contribute to their inspiring work in reducing food insecurity and improving well-being through partnerships directly rooted in the voice of the community.”



## KAI KELTNER

*Math and Public Policy, '26*

**Hometown: Davis, CA; Kyoto, Japan**

**Project Location: Japan**

“TELL Japan is a mental health services organization that provides counseling and suicide prevention services specifically for the English-speaking communities in Japan. We aim to expand the impact and service offerings of this vital organization through a series of programmed events in partnership with student organizations and international programs at top universities. I most look forward to meeting a wide range of students and learning about their lived experiences, ultimately finding ways to collectively contribute towards addressing the ever-pressing need for mental health advocacy.”



## SRIDATTA

## KODAVATIGANTI

*Economics; Human & Organizational Development, '26*

**Hometown: Frisco, TX**

**Project Location: Mysore, India**

“This summer, I’m partnering with Namma Mysore Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to urban development, environmental conservation, and heritage preservation in the city of Mysore, India. I am enthusiastic about the prospect of contributing to Mysore’s vibrant legacy and learning from this enriching experience. This initiative will seek to create a seamless connection between Mysore’s rich heritage and its contemporary potential for eco-friendly tourism. We will aim to empower Mysore with the tools to navigate its future sustainably while cherishing its past.”



## AARON LI

*Mathematics; Computer Science, '26*

**Hometown: Portland, OR**

**Project Location: Brooklyn, NY**

“This summer, I will be working with Building Beats in New York City. My project is focused on creating a web portal that connects students with online courses relevant to their experience and knowledge levels. I am personally drawn to this project because I have seen how technology education has transformed my life and that of my parents. I am eager to take my experience with software and web development and apply it to creating meaningful applications that increase educational equity.”



## DANIEL LIU

*Biomedical Engineering, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Nashville, TN**

“I plan to use the Nichols Fund to make a significant impact on the issue of chronic understaffing of hospice workers and volunteers in the Davidson County area. This problem means a great deal to me as I believe in a society that can treat our sick with dignity and grace. In my experience, being a caregiver doesn't necessarily mean administering medicine or conversing about disease. Thus, I'm creating Vanderbilt Palliative Care Companions and partnering with AliveHospice to provide training, support, and free transportation for people across the Davidson County Area seeking to volunteer at assisted living facilities or patient homes.”



## SOPHIA LOPEZ

*Climate Studies; Human & Organizational Development, '25*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Livingstone, Zambia**

“The Waste Reduction Program in Zambia addresses the issue of plastic pollution. This volunteering opportunity is important to me because it is a great way to learn about how local communities adapt and respond to climate change. While we share knowledge and innovative solutions with the community, we should be equally eager to learn from their experiences and traditional practices. I am interested in understanding how climate change affects human populations, and this project offers a unique opportunity to apply my academic knowledge in a real-world context.”



## AYUSH MADHAR

*BME and MHS, '26*

**Hometown: Fort Myers, FL**

**Project Location: Cambodia**

“Siem Reap, Cambodia, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and popular tourist destinations. However, the rapid increase in tourism, fueled by attractions like the Angkor Temple, has placed considerable strain on local infrastructure and transportation systems. Having witnessed firsthand the significance of having a secure roof over one's head and reliable living conditions, I understand the profound impact that infrastructure can have on individuals and communities alike. Contributing to this project allows me to directly address the challenges faced by communities in Siem Reap, while also drawing from my own experiences to make a meaningful difference.”



## BAILEY MCCALLISTER

*Human and Organizational Development, '25*

**Hometown: Maple Valley, WA**

**Project Location: Ollantaytambo, Peru**

“I will volunteer with Awamaki, a nonprofit organization based in Peru that is dedicated to integrating sustainable programs and connecting Indigenous women artisans from rural communities to the global marketplace. In my role, I will primarily contribute to Marketing & Communications efforts and support the Sustainable Travel Programs. I am filled with anticipation and determination to make a positive impact and further the organization's mission of fostering sustainable development and social change.”



## MADELINE O'KEEFE

*Engineering Science, '26*

**Hometown: Mill Valley, CA**

**Project Location: Iceland**

“For my service project, I am making a short film that brings awareness to Icelandic communities' experiences with climate change through a unique blend of science and storytelling. My mission is to immerse myself in the heart of Iceland. By integrating scientific findings into my documentary, I aim to advocate, inspire, and emphasize the urgency surrounding glaciers melting in these remote regions. Through my lens, I aim to not just observe but to bring to life the communities in these changing environments.”



# BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA ANTUNES

*Biochemistry, '27*

**Hometown: Olathe, KS**

**Project Location: Honduras**

“The opportunity to participate in Global Brigades connects both of my passions: providing assistance to underprivileged cultural groups and helping others through medicine. I will gain irreplaceable hands-on experience through shadowing and assisting in tasks such as check in and medicine distribution. Through my unique position as a Latina volunteer, I will be able to communicate with patients in Spanish and act as an interpreter. I will be able to learn more about how to address difficult structural issues in Latin American countries so that in the future I can work to establish healthcare capacity in lower income countries and bridge the healthcare gap.”



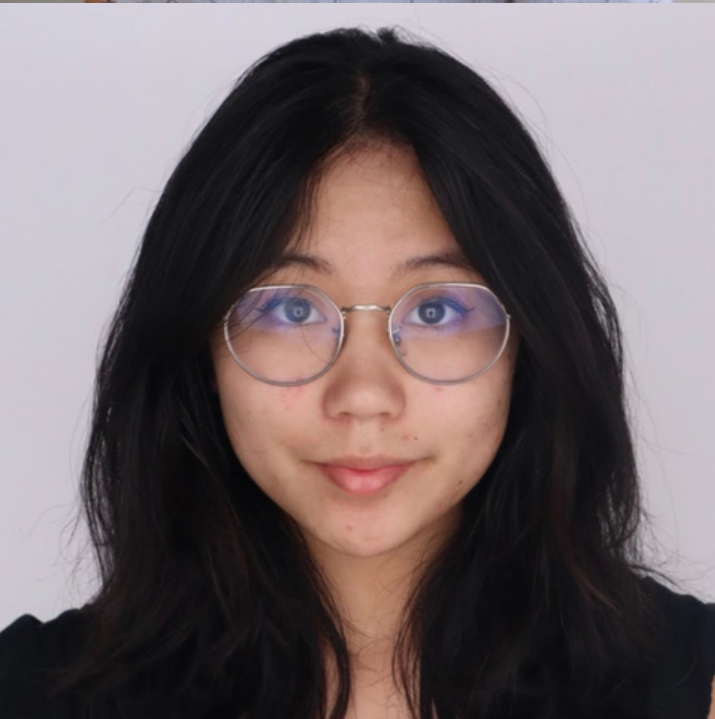
# GRACE PARK

*Human & Organizational Development; Climate Studies, '26*

**Hometown: Carbondale, IL**

**Project Location: O'ahu, HI**

“The Kōkua Hawai‘i Foundation is a non-profit organization supporting environmental education in Hawai‘i with a three-pronged approach. I eagerly anticipate immersing myself in a diverse array of programmatic and community engagement activities offered by the foundation. These experiences will allow me to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge from my interdisciplinary education and practical implementation, propelling me closer to my aspirations as a social entrepreneur and environmental justice advocate.”



# CHRISTIN ANN SANCHEZ

*Computer Science, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Guimaras, Philippines**

“In this service project, I plan to work directly with indigenous students who attend the outreach schools of monasteries in Guimaras. I'm particularly looking forward to getting to know the students on a personal level, learning about their backgrounds and stories, and using that understanding to create engaging, interactive lesson plans tailored to their unique needs. This work is deeply important to me as a Filipino-American, as it allows me to give back to the community where my family originates while also leveraging my academic strengths.”



## ANIKA SHAH

*Medicine, Health and Society, '26*

**Hometown: Tampa, FL**

**Project Location: San Jose, Costa Rica**

“My service learning project involves two main components, which are aimed at gaining clinical experience within a global health context and studying how telemedicine can address health disparities in underserved communities. I'm most looking forward to the opportunity to witness the impact of global health initiatives in action. This service project aligns with my belief in the power of data-driven healthcare technology to improve clinical outcomes and promote health equity.”



## ROJIN SHARMA

*Physics and Computer Science, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Surkhet, Nepal**

“My project aims to empower the Raute community (the last nomadic tribe) in Nepal, by introducing essential woodworking tools to enhance their traditional craft. Starting May 2024, I will be collaborating with SOSEC Nepal to improve the livelihoods of Nepal's last nomadic tribe. What excites me the most is the opportunity to witness the positive impact of our efforts on the Raute's daily lives and the preservation of their cultural identity. This project holds great importance to me as it aligns with my passion for fostering cultural preservation and sustainable development, making a meaningful difference in the lives of a community that values its heritage deeply.”



## PEGGY SHEMA

*Biomedical Engineering, '26*

**Hometown:**

**Project Location: Rwanda**

“The Zero Malaria project seeks to address the high prevalence of malaria in Bugesera. I am eager to serve the Rwandan community, especially those at risk of malaria, and contribute to reducing the impact of this disease. My personal experiences, including witnessing my father's struggle with malaria and my involvement in the "No More Bites" initiative for producing a homemade mosquito repellent during my high school, have fueled my commitment to addressing malaria.”



## SKYLER SHIPP

*Secondary Education; History, '25*

**Hometown: Boulder Creek, CA**

**Project Location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

“I will volunteer to help teach English in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for about three weeks in June or July. I will work with English teachers and perhaps even lead classes, helping students improve their conversational skills. Moreover, I will aid instructors in preparing assignments to improve vocabulary and test progress. I think that classroom experience in such a unique environment as Phnom Penh will help me be more prepared as a teacher, especially as I move into student teaching during my senior year.”



## RAYLEE SIPPLE

*Law History and Society; French, '27*

**Hometown: Logan, WV**

**Project Location: Lisbon, Portugal**

“Over the month of June 2024, I will be placed in Lisbon, Portugal working with local youth communities. I plan to assist them in order to advance their English education, help with homework, and provide overall mentorship, as well as any additional task. I hope to be able to provide the youth community with a memorable experience that will give them opportunities that they may not have been previously afforded. I am looking forward to this trip for being able to immerse myself in a new culture, and to teach the youth as well as learn from them myself. I hope to empower them for future success, and contribute to the prosperity of their community.”



## COLIN VESS

*History; Cinema and Media Arts, '26*

**Hometown: Greensboro, NC**

**Project Location: Neltume, Chile**

“This summer, I will be working as a member of the Huilo-Lanin Environmental Anthropology Project in Neltume, Chile. My project intends to investigate the risk management strategies of the Mapuche, an Indigenous group located mainly in Chile and Argentina. My research will be examining how they have dealt with these natural disasters both in the past and presently, as well as their effects on Mapuche material culture and features. I am most excited to hone my archaeological skills in the field and build meaningful partnerships with local researchers and members of the Mapuche community.”





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