



NAHOM BERHANE SCHOLARSHIP FOR LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSION

2016 - 2021

**FIVE YEARS
IN REVIEW**



The Legacy of Nahom Berhane



Axelle Janczur
Executive Director
Access Alliance

Nahom Berhane worked at Access Alliance as a health promoter for five years. He brought laughter and creativity, engagement and leadership, authenticity and integrity. He loved the community where he grew up and had real respect for every single person he encountered. When he was taken from us it was devastating. As an organization, we realized our role was to support people grieving but also find a way to channel that pain into something that would honour his memory in the future. After a number of community conversations, the idea of a scholarship focusing on community involvement and leadership took root – and here we are, five years later. One of the things I remember about Nahom was that he said “everybody has a story”. Through our Scholarship we are illuminating – and supporting – young people’s stories. His values inform this support and we are proud of his legacy.



Arsema Berhane
Steering Committee Co-Chair

The Nahom Berhane Scholarship for Leadership and Inclusion has been an ode to the legacy of our beloved brother, Nahom. It has enabled us to continue Nahom's work of championing youth leadership and removing barriers to their success. Nahom was also passionate about fighting for equity and this has been a guiding principle of the Scholarship over the past five years. As we have seen in 2020, the impacts of COVID-19 and the long standing pandemic of anti-Black racism have emphasized the inequities in access to resources for Black and Indigenous communities. As we move forward, it's critical for us to continue supporting Black, Indigenous and racialized young leaders as they pursue their educational dreams. This year, we are prioritizing youth of African descent.

Over the last five years, we have enabled access to financial resources and most importantly, ensured young leaders were supported by strong mentors and networks to facilitate their success. Our scholarship recipients have and continue to make meaningful contributions through their social justice and volunteer work across communities. It is this work, the promise of true impact, and the sense of achievement that honours the legacy of Nahom, and keeps his spirit alive for our family.

Scholarship recipients 2016 - 2020



Melanie Manning has led and supported many initiatives such as access to education and anti-racism. She plans to pursue a degree in Nursing and later work with international health organizations.



André Cohegrus has focused his volunteer efforts on working to create a society of inclusion where everyone can have equal opportunities. The Scholarship helped him achieve his dream of attending university.



Sal Sabila has helped open discussions among students about issues such as mental health and homeless youth. With the help of the Scholarship, she planned to pursue post-secondary education in Mathematics and Physical Sciences.



Jathusha Mahenthirarajan founded the first Ontario chapter of GirlTalk and has been a national spokesperson for the "Because I am A Girl" campaign. With the help of the Scholarship, she planned to pursue a BA in Politics or Human Rights and Equity studies along with a certificate in Project Management.



Ravicha Ravinthiran has been a volunteer for many initiatives in her community. Her passions include empowering girls and women, science, business and technology. When she received her Scholarship, she was interested in attending the University of Waterloo for its co-op programs.



Stephen Mensah has been an active volunteer and student leader, encouraging student engagement and empowerment. At the time of receiving the Scholarship, he was set to take a double major in Politics and Governance and Criminology at Ryerson University.

Scholarship recipients 2016 - 2020



Shabina Lafleur-Gangji is a student of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner. She works to amplify the voices of Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities. Her dream is to build a school and healthcare facility where people can access traditional care alongside Western medicine.



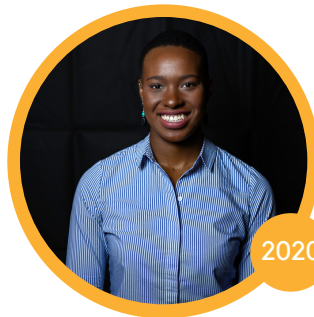
Kishon Mahenthirarajan has been a volunteer for many student and community initiatives. He has founded his own enterprise, Enertire, which aims to create a tire that can generate electricity. The Scholarship will help him continue with his social enterprise and volunteer work while he completes his undergraduate studies.



Blessing Nkenkor is studying Molecular Biology, Health Studies and International Development. She has worked with local, national and international science, health and youth-focused organizations. She manages a multimedia startup and teaches high school and university students video editing and filmmaking.



Emy Fishaye is studying Law and Society at York University. She has volunteered with programs that support newcomers and refugees. She hopes to one day become a lawyer or work for a non-profit organization.



Ruth Wallace has been an active student leader and is passionate about empowering young women to be leaders and develop their self-esteem. She would like to pursue a career in law and work towards becoming a Justice for the Supreme Court of Canada.

Catching up with past recipients

Shabina Lafleur Gangji



After receiving the Nahom Berhane Scholarship, I focused on building my vision of making herbal medicine more accessible while raising my son and completing my coursework with an honours standing. During this time, I co-created Seed, Soil and Spirit School, an online educational platform taught by Black, Indigenous, and other racialized traditional herbalists to bridge land stewardship legacies of traditional medicine and research skills.

I have also started working as the American Herbalists Guild Journal's editor, an academic journal aimed at disseminating research about herbal medicine and distributed worldwide. Through this position, I have successfully transitioned the journal to be open-access to make it accessible to those without the financial means of accessing academic literature. None of this could have been done without the support of the Nahom Berhane Scholarship. I am forever grateful for the support.

André Cohegrus



The support I received from the Nahom Berhane Scholarship provided me with much-needed financial aid for my undergrad degree and connections that became important stepping stones toward my goals. I am in my final year of studies completing a dual degree in Honours Business Administration (HBA) at Western University where I have been actively involved in the student community: I became VP Internal of the Undergraduate Engineering Society and a founding member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity. As part of the latter, I developed the philanthropy pillar where, to this day, we have raised over \$30,000 for charity and volunteered over 6,000 hours for various organizations. Through the network of the Nahom Berhane Scholarship, I was able to join BMO's internship program and become a Student Experience leader and Western University's BMO campus ambassador. These are just highlights of my volunteer work in school.

André Cohegrus (cont)

The NBS played an important role in starting my path towards all these experiences and for that I am forever grateful. I will continue to work towards honouring Nahom's legacy through volunteerism and community involvement in all my future endeavours

Emy Fishaye



I am currently enrolled in my third year in the Law and Society Program at York University. I aspire to enroll in law school after finishing my undergraduate studies.

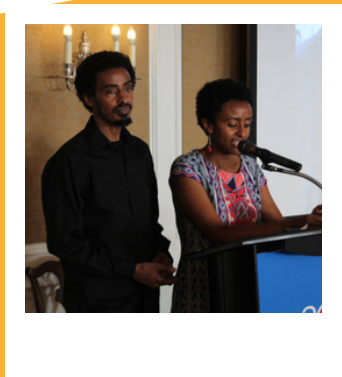
2020 has been a rollercoaster, but the Scholarship from the Nahom Berhane family and Access Alliance has given me a light of hope in motivating me to reach my goals. It has helped me focus on my studies and has relieved me of the financial struggles and stress of worrying about my university fees. I will always be grateful for it.

Stephen Mensah



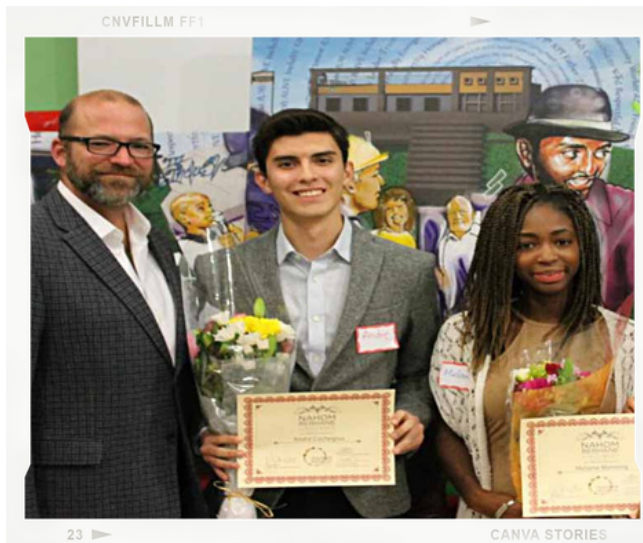
I am now in my second year at Ryerson University taking a double major (Honours) in Criminology and Politics & Governance. I serve as the Education Lead for the Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC), City of Toronto's official youth advisory body. In my role I started a campaign dubbed #RECLAIMOURVOICE aimed at tackling the anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism prevalent in Ontario schools. In February of 2020, I gave a press conference at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, laying out our recommendations and expressing the need for urgent action to be taken by our government to address this issue. I also brought together students who had experienced racism to share their experiences with MPPs, including Ontario's Minister of Education. My initiative has been featured by HuffPost Canada, CBC, National Observer, CP24 and I have been able to use these opportunities to shed light on what BIPOC students continue to face in our schools. This Scholarship has allowed me to spend time on advocacy and making a difference in my community. The story of Nahom's life continues to be a source of motivation in all my endeavours, and I hold firmly to the values of compassion, perseverance and love, three pillars that Nahom's life exemplified.

Scholarship Award Celebrations!



Our donors make a difference

Once in a while in our lives, we come across a rare opportunity to join something meaningful that will have a lasting impact on our community. If we are truly lucky, we get to be involved from the beginning, help sow the seeds to a new initiative, and nurture this initiative through time, to maturity. For me, that opportunity is the Nahom Berhane Scholarship for Leadership and Inclusion.



Through time, I've come to realize that the Scholarship is so much bigger than what it presents itself to be at face value. I've worked closely with an incredible team of passionate volunteers, Access Alliance staff and family members with a unifying purpose in mind: to remember, honour and celebrate Nahom's life and legacy. And our purpose comes to light through the Scholarship, when we help students by eliminating the financial barriers to post-secondary education. By doing so, we are not only telling them that they belong; that their contributions, their ideas and their voices are important and worth striving for, we are also helping shape a future where diversity and inclusion are essential to creating equal opportunity in a well-rounded society.

I am proud of the work we've accomplished to date and I am truly humbled and amazed by the impact our collective efforts are having on today's youth — tomorrow's leaders. I know my volunteerism and my annual donation to the Scholarship truly do make a difference.

I invite you to consider [supporting the Nahom Berhane Scholarship for Leadership and Inclusion through a meaningful financial contribution](#). Join me in helping level the playing field and create inclusive opportunity for tomorrow's leaders.

Louis-Michel Taillefer
Senior Manager

BMO  **Financial Group**

Thank you!

We would like to extend much gratitude to our community of partners, donors, mentors, volunteers, applicants and scholarship recipients. You honour and embody the legacy of Nahom Berhane and we look forward to your continued support and contributions to the Nahom Berhane Scholarship for Leadership and Inclusion.

To date, we have raised \$61,723 toward our goal of \$100,000.

[Please donate today and help us support young leaders in reaching their educational goals.](#)

2021 Applications

Applications to the Nahom Berhane Scholarship for Leadership and Inclusion are open!

Find more information about the Scholarship along with application guidelines, the 2021 application form, and budget and mentor forms at www.nahom.org

If you have any questions about applying for the Scholarship, please contact us at info@nahom.org.

#nahomlegacy

