



SAC Scholarships 2024-2025

Les bourses d'études d'OAC



Speech-Language & Audiology Canada
Orthophonie et Audiologie Canada
Communicating care | La communication à cœur

THANK YOU

We are thrilled to announce recipients of the SAC Scholarship program, recognizing outstanding graduate students who have demonstrated dedication, resilience, and academic excellence. Scholarships play a vital role in shaping students' futures by easing financial burdens, creating new opportunities for growth, and empowering them to pursue their dreams without limitations. Beyond financial support, these awards serve as a testament to the hard work and potential of each recipient, encouraging them to strive for success and make meaningful contributions to their communities. Please join us in celebrating these exceptional students and their bright futures as communication health professionals!

2024-2025 SAC Scholarship Committee

Victoria McLeod, M.Cl.Sc.
Chair

Susan Summerby-Murray, S-LP
Vice-Chair

Wenonah Campbell, S-LP
Kathleen House, S-LP
Coleen McAskill, S-LP
Robyn Richardson, Aud
Allison Robbins, Aud
Khalil Surahyo, Aud
Valérie Te Riele, S-LP
Ellysa Vardy, S-LP
Britney Watters, Aud

A *heartfelt* thank you to our donors

Our donors make a profound difference in the lives of our students, opening doors to education, opportunity, and a brighter future. Their generosity not only changes lives today but also creates lasting ripple effects in our community. We are deeply grateful to the *Elks of Canada, The Beach Family*, and *Maria Scaringi of KIDSPEECH*, for their kindness and commitment to empowering the next generation of communication health professionals.

Elks & Royal Purple
Fund for Children



The Beach Family



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Ye-In Jung

University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

Ye-In Jung is a second-year speech-language pathology student at the University of Alberta. She currently serves as co-chair of the EDI Committee for the Rehabilitation Medicine Students' Association (RMSA) and as co-president of *Music for Memory*, where she leads music therapy activities for seniors with dementia in long-term care facilities. Ye-In has a special interest in exploring the integration of neurotechnology into speech-language pathology to enhance treatment methods and improve accessibility.

Susan Lane Scholarship

I am truly honoured to be the recipient of the 2024-2025 Susan Lane Scholarship. I sincerely thank you for your generous support as I pursue my journey toward becoming a speech-language pathologist. This scholarship has inspired me to give back, both to my community and to others on similar paths. I am committed to paying this act of kindness forward and making a lasting, positive impact through my work. Thank you once again for your support and recognition.



Sewit Tewelde

University of Toronto
Speech-Language Pathology

Sewit is a second-year student in the Master of Health Science program in Speech Language Pathology (SLP) at the University of Toronto (UofT). She completed an undergraduate degree at UofT in Nutrition, Physiology and French, during which she developed a passion for language and healthcare. She plans to use her degree to empower her patients and create spaces conducive to their success and inclusion by minimizing stigma attached to communication disabilities through education and advocacy. In addition, she aims to support marginalized communities with her clinical skills to ensure equitable access to SLP resources.

Deborah Kully Scholarship

I am writing to express my gratitude for your recognition of my academic efforts and your support of my journey to becoming a speech-language pathologist. I am privileged to have access to the educational opportunities that I do, and with the support of the Deborah Kully Scholarship, I can pursue my goals in speech-language pathology with fewer financial barriers. I plan to use this award to complete my studies and ultimately decrease stigma towards those with communication disabilities such that my clients can create meaningful lives through their expression, however that looks to them. Thank you again for your support!



Meriem El Attar
Laurentian University
Speech-Language Pathology

William J. Blake Scholarship

I am honored to be selected for the 2024-2025 Elks & Royal Purple Fund for Children William J. Blake Scholarship. Receiving this scholarship will alleviate some of the financial burden of my clinical practicum and allow me to dedicate myself to research in the field of Speech and Language Pathology. This award is extremely meaningful to me. It confirms that my hard work has been recognized, and it motivates me to continue pursuing my research in the field of Speech-Language Pathology. I appreciate it more than you can imagine!

Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarships



Elena Gamm
McMaster University
Speech-Language Pathology

I hope to work with adult's who are post brain-injury, creating functional and personally meaningful goals and activities for the individuals that I work with. I hope to take therapy outside the walls of the clinic, developing a natural and impactful treatment plan that will support my clients in their everyday lives. I am extremely grateful to be selected as a recipient of the Gordon Leslie Memorial scholarship as a recognition of my dedication to the field of speech-language pathology. Thank you!



Nicole McRorie
University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

Thank you very much for your support through this scholarship! I am so grateful that you chose to support students who will help others in our community. As a mature student, it was difficult to decide to come back to school because of various expenses I have now that I did not when I was younger. By receiving this scholarship, I will be able to pay more of those expenses and have more capacity to focus on making the most of my last two practicums. Thank you again, I appreciate your generosity!



Camila Pereyra
McMaster University
Speech-Language Pathology

My name is Camila and I am a second year Speech-Language Pathology student at McMaster. I have known that I wanted to work in pediatrics since I was a child myself, and I feel as though I am living my dream as a future SLP. I am fortunate enough to have had wonderful professors and clinical instructors that have only amplified my love for this field. I am exceptionally grateful to have received this award and wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to everyone involved in granting this scholarship.



Thank You

I AM THRILLED TO RECEIVE THE ELKS AND ROYAL PURPLE FUND FOR CHILDREN GORDON LESLIE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP, AND EXTEND MY SINCEREST THANKS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS. AS A FUTURE CLINICIAN, I HOPE TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE NEURODIVERSE, AND TO INCORPORATE PATIENT- AND FAMILY-CENTERED CARE AS WELL AS CHILD-LED THERAPY INTO MY PRACTICE.

SINCERELY, EMMA HANCOCK, SLP STUDENT

Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarship

Emma Hancock

University of British Columbia
Speech-Language Pathology

Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarships



Jenna Beaudin
Western University
Speech-Language Pathology

I am deeply honored and grateful to be a recipient of the Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children - Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarship. In my future career, I aspire to work in acute dysphagia care and advocate for improved services in rural communities. This scholarship will enable me to dedicate my final months of graduate school to my studies and preparation for my career. Thank you, Elks Canada—I sincerely appreciate your generosity.



Hannah Bitz
University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

Working as a speech-language pathologist has been a goal for me for quite a while. I spent much of pre-clinical career working as an SLP-A and respite worker and discovered a passion for working with children. Coursework and my current placement have shifted that passion from the community setting to the hospital, more specifically towards the children who start their lives in NICU. This scholarship is greatly appreciated as it will allow me to continue to pursue placements which help me hone my skills and provide care to those who need it.



Keza Cover
University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the sponsors of this scholarship. I am currently placed in Canmore and will be moving down to Sylvan Lake for my second externship. This scholarship helps ease the burden of moving costs as I pursue placements that align with my career goals. Thank you for your support, kindness and recognition.



Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarship

Jelena Stakić

University of Toronto
Speech-Language Pathology



Megan Krone

University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

I am a second-year student in Speech Language Pathology. I have an agricultural background and worked in research for over 10 years. Being a mentor to other researchers, as well as volunteering for ISTAR, helped drive me towards pursuing a new career where I could have meaningful impacts on others lives. I am excited to continue to learn and grow as a clinician, and to work alongside my future clients.

Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarship

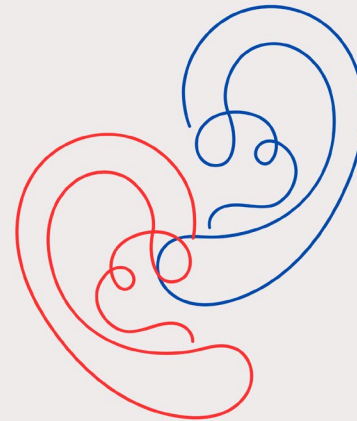
My name is Megan Krone, and I am honored to be one of the 2024-2025 recipients of the Gorden Leslie Memorial Scholarship. I am incredibly grateful to be presented with this award, as it has made a significant impact on me being able to attend a wonderful opportunity during on of my upcoming placements. This program can be quite challenging, and I thank you for providing an opportunity to support students by helping to ease the financial burden.



Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarship

Tran Kha-Vy
University of Ottawa
Audiology

Thank You



I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Elks & Royal Purple Fund for Children for their generous support in my journey to becoming an audiologist and for selecting me as the Gordon Leslie Memorial Scholarship recipient. This scholarship, dedicated to those pursuing a career with the pediatric population, aligns perfectly with my passion for working with children. I am thankful for the opportunity it provides. Your support not only helps me advance in my education but also strengthens my commitment to positively impacting young patients' lives. As I near the end of my studies, I look forward to starting my career and hope to pay this generosity forward by contributing to pediatric audiology. Thank you again for your kindness, encouragement, and recognition.

Warm regards,

Tran Kha-Vy Nguyen



Dear Maria,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my sincerest gratitude for your generous support through the KIDSPEECH Travelling Scholarship.

Receiving this award means more to me than words can fully capture. Not only does it offer invaluable financial support as I continue my studies and clinical training, but it also carries with it a deep sense of encouragement – an affirmation that the long nights, the tough days, and my commitment to my future in communication health have been seen and recognized.

As someone who is passionate about making a difference in the lives of individuals with communication and swallowing challenges, your support strengthens my resolve to carry forward with care, curiosity, and compassion. I am deeply inspired by your contributions to this field and the ways in which you help open doors for emerging clinicians like myself. Your generosity makes tangible change possible – not only in my academic journey but in the lives of every client I will serve.

Thank you for believing in my potential. I promise to carry this honour with humility and to use this opportunity to grow, give back, and embody the values that this scholarship represents.

Warmest regards,





Lara Muntasir Al Nubani

McMaster University
Speech-Language Pathology

Lara is a dedicated second-year Speech-Language Pathology student at McMaster University with a passion for working with diverse populations. She believes that everyone—regardless of their background or circumstances—deserves access to high-quality care and is committed to making speech therapy equitable and inclusive. Whether working with children or adults, she is committed to providing evidence-based, person-centered care that empowers individuals to communicate and thrive. She values a holistic approach to therapy, recognizing that communication is deeply intertwined with identity, social connection, and overall well-being.

KIDSPEECH Travelling Scholarship

Receiving this award means more to me than words can fully capture. Not only does it offer invaluable financial support as I continue my studies and clinical training, but it also carries with it a deep sense of encouragement—an affirmation that the long nights, the tough days, and my commitment to my future in communication health have been seen and recognized. As someone who is passionate about making a difference in the lives of individuals with communication and swallowing challenges, your support strengthens my resolve to carry forward with care, curiosity, and compassion. I am deeply inspired by your contribution to this field and the ways in which you help open doors for emerging clinicians like myself. Your generosity makes tangible change possible—not only in my academic journey but in the lives of every client I will serve. Thank you for believing in my potential. I promise to carry this honour with humility and to use this opportunity to grow, give back, and embody the values that this scholarship represents.



Minseo "Sunny" Kim

University of Toronto
Speech-Language Pathology

Minseo (Sunny) Kim is a second-year Master of Speech-Language Pathology student at the University of Toronto. She completed her Bachelor degree in Health Sciences with a specialization in child health at McMaster University. As a recipient of the KIDSPEECH Leadership Scholarship, she is committed to fostering inclusive and patient-centered care in diverse communities with particular interest in serving rural/remote and racialized immigrant populations.

KIDSPEECH Leadership Scholarship

I am incredibly honored to be a recipient of the SAC KIDSPEECH Leadership Scholarship. As a second-year Speech-Language Pathology student at the University of Toronto, I am deeply committed to using my education and leadership to amplify and celebrate diverse, marginalized, and overlooked voices. This scholarship affirms my passion for community involvement and my vision of creating meaningful, inclusive change beyond clinical practice. Your generosity inspires me to continue advocating for equitable communication access and fostering spaces where all voices are heard.

Thank you for investing in future SLPs and for supporting those of us striving to be agents of social change. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and look forward to carrying this mission forward in my career.



Rachel Benninger

Western University
Speech-Language Pathology

Rachel Benninger is a doctoral candidate in her fourth year of the combined MClSc/PhD program in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at Western University. Her doctoral research focuses on the co-development of a spoken language assessment tool for use by Teachers of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) to support oral language development in their DHH students. Following the completion of her degree, Rachel plans to pursue a clinical career as a Speech-Language Pathologist. She hopes to continue collaborating with other professionals to develop, test, and refine tools to support individuals with communication disorders in reaching their full potential.

KIDSPEECH Doctoral Scholarship

I am honoured to be chosen as a recipient of the KIDSPEECH Doctoral Scholarship through SAC's Scholarship Program. In pursuing my doctoral degree, I have learned many valuable lessons, from the importance of collaboration, to not giving up when the going gets tough. Another important lesson is that a bit of support from someone else can go a long way in helping me achieve my goals. I would not be able to complete my degree without the support of those around me. Thank you so much for your dedication to supporting today's students and for the provision of this financial support. I'm looking forward to the day when I become a Speech-Language Pathologist, the day I defend my doctoral dissertation, and the day I can turn around and support aspiring SLPs as you have done.

***The
Beach Family
Graduate Scholarships***





Ryan's commitment to serving underserved communities, particularly immigrant seniors, stems from personal experience and a desire to reduce healthcare disparities. Inspired by his grandmother Omi's journey with dementia and dysphagia, he saw the vital role compassionate, culturally responsive care plays in preserving dignity and quality of life. Immigrant seniors often face language and cultural barriers that limit access to care, and Ryan is especially drawn to addressing these challenges through speech-language pathology. His academic focus on geriatric dysphagia reflects this dedication. Outside the classroom, he connects with this community by performing jazz and classic songs at his grandparents' seniors' home, creating moments of joy and connection. These experiences have deepened his understanding of the emotional and cultural dimensions of care and reinforced his commitment to providing person-centered, linguistically accessible support. Motivated by both research and personal connection, Ryan aims to bridge service gaps for immigrant seniors, honoring his grandmother's legacy through work that brings dignity and empathy to those who need it most.

Ryan Kaefer

University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

Beach Family Graduate Scholarship

Thank you so much for selecting me as a recipient of the Beach Family Graduate Scholarship. I'm truly grateful for your support in helping me pursue my academic journey. I'm currently in my first year of the Speech-Language Pathology program at the University of Alberta, and as I prepare to begin clinical placements in the coming months, this generous gift will go a long way in easing financial pressures for my family. After graduation, I hope to serve in a rural community, with a particular focus on geriatric and palliative care, as well as dysphagia management. Having had a family member with dementia, this area of care is particularly close to my heart. Thank you for investing in the future of Speech-Language Pathology in Canada—your generosity makes a real difference and does not go unnoticed.



As an English-French bilingual, Tracie is passionate about supporting Francophone families in Alberta's official language minority communities (OLMCs), particularly in underserved rural areas like Peace River, St. Paul, and Lac la Biche. Despite the rise in French-speaking immigrants from countries like Cameroon, Sénégal, and Togo, access to bilingual healthcare services, including speech-language pathology (SLP), remains limited in these regions. Tracie's work with L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) highlighted these disparities. While some urban families accessed French-language SLP services, rural participants reported none. This gap was further evident during her clinical training at the University of Alberta's Corbett Clinic, where French-speaking clients had received years of SLP care solely in English, despite limited proficiency and no access to interpreters. Motivated by these experiences, Tracie aims to pursue a rural clinical placement to provide bilingual, evidence-based SLP services that reflect clients' full language profiles, including both official and non-official languages spoken in these communities.

Tracie Pospisil
University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

Beach Family Graduate Scholarship

I am a bilingual (English-French) speech-language pathology student with a strong interest in culturally responsive care for neurodiverse and multilingual populations. My academic, clinical, and community experiences have focused on addressing service gaps in underserved areas, particularly within Alberta's official language minority community. This award will support my upcoming clinical placements in rural Alberta, where access to French SLP services is especially limited. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Beach family for their continued support of emerging SLPs who are committed to improving service equity across Canada.



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Gabrielle Morin
Dalhousie University
Speech-Language Pathology

Gabrielle Morin is a third-year speech-language pathology student at Dalhousie University. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Alberta, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, with Distinction. Gabrielle is also a recipient of the 2023 Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's Program (CGS-M) for her thesis research involving the development of a new pragmatic assessment tool. In her free time, she loves to play a competitive squash match and try cooking something new!

Grace Margaret Harris Scholarship

I wanted to extend my sincere gratitude for selecting me as a recipient of this award. As a soon-to-be-practicing Speech-Language Pathologist, I look forward to providing services to children and their families in rural settings in Nova Scotia. It is with the help of professional organizations such as Speech-Language and Audiology Canada that students and new clinicians can access valuable resources and clinical expertise which ultimately supports high-quality service delivery in rural communities. Thank you again for this honour!

SAC Research Scholarship



Frank Day
Dalhousie University
Speech-Language Pathology

I want to express my deep gratitude for your selection of myself for the SAC Research Scholarship. Your support has tremendously impacted my educational journey and reduced the financial burden of pursuing my goals. I'm a M.Sc. in Human Communication Sciences student, and I'm now completing my third and final year of study. This field has been a passion of mine for some time, having completed a B.Sc. in Neuroscience, a certificate of Disability Management and a certificate of Neurotechnology and Innovation to get here.

SAC Research Scholarship



Diana Figliomeni
McMaster University
Speech-Language Pathology

I am honoured to be selected as a recipient of the SAC Research Scholarship. The impact of this scholarship extends beyond financial relief. This scholarship is a sign of your support for my research endeavors, and I could not be more grateful for it. Your acknowledgement of my research efforts has strengthened my confidence in this project, and for that, I cannot thank you enough.

Audiology Leadership Scholarship



Jana Bataineh
Western University
Audiology

I am very grateful to be a recipient of the Audiology Leadership Award, thank you to Speech-Language and Audiology Canada for sponsoring this award. This award will empower me to continue to advocate for the important role of audiologists within primary care teams through my research work and as a member of the profession.



Kylie Brajcich

University of British Columbia
Speech-Language Pathology

Kylie's passion for speech-language pathology began as a teenager when a close family member, diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, began working with a speech-language pathologist. This experience inspired her to pursue studies in linguistics, psychology, and speech sciences during her undergraduate degree. Kylie graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and Social Sciences from Simon Fraser University in June 2023. Soon after, she began her Master's of Science program in speech-language pathology at the University of British Columbia in September 2023. This spring, she will be completing her final clinical placement at a Movement Disorders Clinic, bringing her journey full circle.

Virginia Martin Memorial Scholarship

I am truly grateful to have been chosen as the recipient of the inaugural Virginia Martin Memorial Scholarship. This award will help alleviate the financial burden of my relocation to a new city this spring, where I will complete my final clinical placement. Your kindness is a tribute to Virginia's legacy, and I strive to honour it by dedicating myself to my clients, the field of speech-language pathology, and giving back to my community. Once again, thank you for your support and generous contribution.

Isabel Richard Scholarships



Leyla Barber
Dalhousie University
Speech-Language Pathology

I am deeply honored to receive the Isabel Richard Scholarship and to be recognized for my passion in the field of speech and language pathology. My interest in the power of communication has driven me to pursue a career in speech rehabilitation, where I aspire to help individuals regain their voices and reconnect with the world. Inspired by Isabel Richard's vision, I am committed to advancing the field and making a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by communication disorders.



Kyra Pocsai
University of Melbourne
Speech-Language Pathology

I am truly honoured and grateful to be selected as the recipient of the Isabel Richard Scholarship. This generous award will support my studies in Speech-Language Pathology, allowing me to focus more on my academics and become the best speech-language pathologist that I can be. I am incredibly excited to begin my journey as a future Speech-Language Pathologist and am inspired by the legacy of Isabel Richard's dedication to the field. Thank you again for all your support!



Melissa Hazen
University of Toronto
Audiology

The transition from a working professional back to a student was not an easy one. The responsibilities that are accumulated do not disappear when the working status has changed. That being said, there is a beauty in knowledge and something invigorating about being a student again. I have enjoyed my path thus far, and your generosity has inspired me to continue to push forward.



Parisa Shahbazi

St. Lawrence College
Communication Health Assistant

My name is Parisa, and I'm currently studying in the Communication Disorders Assistant (CDA) program at St. Lawrence College. I hold degrees in English Literature and Linguistics, along with certificates in MBA and DBA. Originally from Iran, I moved to Canada to grow personally and professionally. My passion for language, communication, and helping others led me to the field of communication health. As a future CDA, I'm dedicated to supporting individuals with speech and language challenges—especially children and families—and look forward to contributing meaningfully to the communication health community in Canada.

Communication Health Assistant Student Scholarship

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for selecting me as a recipient of the SAC Communication Health Assistant Student Scholarship. I am truly honored and thankful for your recognition and generous support. I also want to sincerely thank the faculty at St. Lawrence College for their guidance, especially Stephanie Ryan, whose encouragement and dedication have had a meaningful impact on my journey.

This award has strengthened my motivation as a CDA student to pursue excellence in the field of communication health and to make a positive difference in the lives of those I will serve. Thank you once again for believing in me and investing in the future of students like me.

Student Achievement Awards



Aanjana Piratheeparatnam
University of Toronto
Speech-Language Pathology

I have had the privilege of being the Co-President for the amazing SLP Class of 2025. I am looking forward to graduating soon and taking the next steps toward creating meaningful impact in the field. As a future clinician, I am interested in working with both paediatric and adult populations. I have a particular interest in the neonatal population as well as dysphagia management in older adults, and I look forward to continuing to grow in both areas as I move forward in my training.



Anh Nhu Emily Tran
University of Toronto
Speech-Language Pathology

I aspire to be an outstanding SLP who can help clients & their family members. I want to inspire others from multicultural & low socio-economic backgrounds to pursue higher education and raise awareness that this is a path that is possible for them to achieve as well. I am especially interested in multilingualism & aphasia. I want to pursue a PhD, and my goal is to be an SLP who can support clients through my background.



Jomanna Sleiman
University of Alberta
Speech-Language Pathology

Beyond the monetary relief, this recognition has given me a meaningful boost in confidence as a clinician—a reassuring reminder that my efforts and passion for this discipline are both acknowledged and valued. I am beyond grateful to be selected for this award and would like to send my deepest thanks to the SAC and those involved who make these opportunities accessible to students like myself.



Kiruththika Pushpalingam
University of Toronto
Speech-Language Pathology

Becoming a speech-language pathologist has been a dream of mine since high school, inspired by the meaningful impact I witnessed when a loved one received support from a SLP. After completing the program, I hope to work with the pediatric population, with a special interest in literacy as well as cleft lip and palate. Thank you sincerely for your generous donations supporting my education through this award.