



Davidson Institute
Fellows Scholarship

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**IRVINE TEEN AWARDED \$25,000 SCHOLARSHIP FOR INNOVATIVE
PROJECT LINKING MUSIC PRACTICE TO ENHANCED CONCENTRATION
ABILITIES**

Helaine Zhao Named 2023 Davidson Fellows Scholarship Winner

Los Angeles – The Davidson Fellows Scholarship Program has announced the 2023 scholarship winners. Among the honorees is 16-year-old Helaine Zhao of Irvine. Zhao won a \$25,000 scholarship for her project, *Finding Focus: A Musical Medium to Increased Attention Span*. She is one of only 21 students across the country to be recognized as a 2023 scholarship winner.

“Being able to become a Davidson Fellow through music is a dream come true for me,” said Zhao. “I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity to share my project and musical ideas with more people.”

Drawing on her 13-year journey with piano, Zhao’s project explores the intriguing intersection of instrumental music practice and concentration enhancement. She was inspired to create this initiative after observing the significant improvement in her piano students’ attention spans over time. Zhao’s “Finding Focus” project illustrates the pivotal role of music as a unique, effective tool for training focus and attention—a quality that is critically needed in our current society yet seems to be dwindling. The project aims not only to boost productivity and problem-solving capacities, but also highlight the role of music in fostering community connection and empathy.

Zhao is a rising senior at Pacific Academy in Irvine, where she balances her time between academics and her profound love for music. Outside of her musical commitments, Zhao enjoys writing, baking, and reading. She has published five novels online, launched her own cookie business, and founded Between You & I Organization, a non-profit organization that encourages student volunteers to make a positive impact on the community.

“We are proud to announce this year’s class of Davidson Fellows Scholarship recipients who have completed significant projects with the potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature, and music,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “The innovations and new thinking added by each class of Fellows

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serve as an inspiration for future scholars to apply novel technologies and groundbreaking ideas to solve the world's most difficult problems.”

The 2023 Davidson Fellows will be honored during a reception at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. and with a virtual project presentation ceremony in September 2023.

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 college scholarships to students 18 or younger, who have completed significant projects that have the potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$9.4 million in scholarship funds to 428 students since its inception in 2001, and has been named one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships by [U.S. News & World Report](#). It is a program of the Davidson Institute, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Reno, Nev. that supports profoundly gifted youth.

About the Davidson Institute

Founded by Bob Davidson in 1999, the Davidson Institute recognizes, nurtures and supports profoundly intelligent young people, and provides opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive difference. The Institute offers support through a number of programs and services, including the Davidson Fellows Scholarship and the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](#). For more information about the 2023 Davidson Fellows, please visit: [DavidsonFellows.org](#).

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High-resolution photos are available at

[DavidsonFellows.org](#)