Linakis Leaders Scholarship

The John S. and Yorka C. Linakis Leaders Scholarship was created to honor the exceptional community service work of John S. and Yorka C. Linakis, long-time residents and avid supporters of the Borough of Queens. They were active in a multitude of community, civic, and interfaith organizations. Their philanthropic endeavors include a legacy of scholarships to be granted to worthy Queens College students based on merit, financial need, and a keen interest in the betterment of their communities. This spring, 18 Queens College students, with outstanding records of both service and academic performance, are each receiving an award in the amount of $1,000 in recognition of their exceptional achievements.

Acknowledgments
Olga Zaferatos Karras
Executor, Linakis Leaders Scholarship Fund
James Muyskens
President, Queens College
James Stellar
Provost, Queens College
Joann Acquista
Development, Queens College

Review Panel
Emanuel Avila, Student Affairs
Eva Fernández, Center for Teaching & Learning
Yasemin Jones, Office of the Provost
Ross Wheeler, Honors

Opening Remarks
Yasemin Jones
Special Assistant to the Provost
Eva Fernández
Director, Center for Teaching & Learning
Assistant Vice Provost

Presentation of Awards for Outstanding Service
Emanuel Avila
Student Affairs

Presentation of Awards for Outstanding Research
Ross Wheeler
Honors

Closing Remarks
Olga Karras
Linakis Leaders Scholarship Fund

Awards Ceremony
Queens College
May 21, 2013
Patio Room

“there are so many changes people would like to see in the world and I feel that in order for those changes to happen, people need to decide to be leaders and make that change occur. Change doesn't happen by chance, rather through hard work and effort, the kind that I plan to do every day in my work.”

Jordan Farrand
Linakis Service Leaders

Victoria Brown
(Food Service Management, Family & Consumer Sci. Education) As Vice Chair of Programming in student government, Victoria has been a continuing advocate for healthy living. She helped open Ginger’s Corner in the dining hall, which expands campus options for gluten-free, dairy-free, and vegan foods. Victoria was a constant presence at the Queens College Hurricane Sandy shelter where she worked with kids in the family shelter.

Charmeine Browne
(Food Service Management, French) On the 2011 service learning trip to Philadelphia, Charmeine volunteered with non-profit Philabundance to learn about and address issues of food poverty. She has gone on to develop and implement her own initiatives as a service learning project manager, through which she coordinated trips to a Ronald McDonald house and the annual Midnight Run to feed the homeless.

Raquel Cerrato
(Psychology, Student Support Services) As a Peer Counselor, Raquel developed invaluable skills to help other students. She’s expanded her work in counseling on and off campus, taking calls at the Long Island Crisis Center and facilitating interventions for children with Down’s Syndrome as a lab assistant. She will continue on at the Columbia University School of Social Work in the fall.

Kelly Chan
(Communication Sciences & Disorders, Psychology) Starting from the Key Club in high school, Kelly has been a selfless leader in her community. As President of Circle K, she grew a club of four members into a large organization and raised substantial funds. Her organizing ability would eventually allow her to rise to the role of District Governor for Circle K where she oversees thirty-two clubs.

Jordann Randall
(Psychology) Jordann combines his passion for volunteering with his love for medicine and helping others in need. In fall 2012, he volunteered at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Center where he spoke with and comforted patients to ease their healing process.

Hannah Hong
(Biology, Biochemistry) From her first Saturdays at the Center of Choices and Opportunities, working on drawings with mentally disabled students, to coordinating collages as Art Director at the Center, Hannah has shown a recognized commitment to helping others. She now engages in research on cellular homeostasis, preparing for a PhD in biology that will allow her to focus on degenerative diseases that impact people across the world.

Silky Kataria
(Neuroscience, Spanish, Chemistry) Silky is guided towards a career in medicine by the dream that she can bring better days to the lives of others. She has worked with many immigrant-serving organizations, teaching English courses at a Nepalese non-profit, and preparing Afghani women for the citizenship exam through the organization Women for Afghan Women.

Gabriella Kigler
(Neuroscience, Anthropology, Chemistry, Psychology) For Gabriella, shoving about intolerance and injustice was not enough, she had to fight it. She engaged with peers at events hosted by CERRU and eventually became a dialogue facilitator. She was later honored as a ULI’7Tzedek fellow, running food pantries to support local and global impoverished peoples.

Zaheda Nasimi
(Honors in the Social Sciences) As part of her high school’s Key Club, Zaheda brought holiday treats to new families in the community, leading the FeedingNYC initiative and later Toys for Tots. In her first year at Queens, she quickly became involved with Circle K, joining in their fundraising efforts for UNICEF. She is also a regular contributor to dialogue events hosted by CERRU.

Deneese Ortiz
(History, Secondary Education) A longtime volunteer for NYPR, Deneese has promoted awareness for issues such as affordable higher education and helping the homeless. She ran a project speaking about the importance of the DREAM Act, showing the stories of those who would benefit from its passing. Excited to teach in the community, she is now working with local schools to combat tobacco advertising towards teens.

Cheryl Osherovitch
(Communication Sciences & Disorders, Psychology) As a volunteer at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Cheryl got a first-hand experience of the important work speech-language pathologists do and the different types of patients they help every day. She was selected for a service trip to Israel where she prepared packages of soldiers and delivered food to villagers in need. She now works with elderly citizens in her community, helping with transportation to both doctor’s visits and social engagements.

Justina Parmino
(Communication Sciences & Disorders, Spanish) A warm and friendly presence at the Children’s Medical Center, Justina brought smiles to patients through games and conversation. As part of the Bilingual Literacy Lab, she co-authored a book for children with developmental disabilities and rehabilitated patients through cognition exercises and storytelling at the New Beginnings Center for Brain Injury.

Edward Rosengarten
(Accounting, Business & Liberal Arts) Overcoming his own doubts to lead, Edward has organized, led, and managed eleven groups of students to meet experts in the fields of finance and economics. As Coordinator of the World of Work project, he takes pride in watching other students become better communicators through their meetings with accomplished people in the field.

Leora Schreiber
(Psychology, Business & Liberal Arts) A retreat advisor for YACHAD, Leora worked with special needs teens on communication skills and social behaviors. She currently teaches biology and chemistry labs at a high school where she both teaches and mentors young students. Leora was later accepted as a participant in the Research Experience for Undergraduates at Brooklyn College where she is able to present her research and network to meet experts in the field.

Jacqueline Segelnick
(Urban Studies) Passionate about striving to end the causes of poverty, Jacqueline makes it a priority to put her education into action. She’s built classrooms in Nicaragua so that farmers could learn sustainable farming practices. Back home, she volunteered at a soup kitchen, an experience she has used to spread awareness of hunger across campus. As a future doctor and researcher, she hopes to promote the connections between poverty, disease, and public health.

Hilana Smith
(Psychology, Jewish Studies, Arabic) Out of the courage borne from her own experiences, Hilana has dedicated her life to helping others work through difficult times. She has worked with a group of girls whose broken homes have led to homelessness, giving them the emotional support they need. The head of the Charity Board for Golden Key Honor Society, she oversees fundraising opportunities for outside organizations.

Joong Min Yun
(Biology) Throughout high school and college, Brian has helped out students on the verge of academic success, but under financial strain, through his many years as a volunteer tutor and tutor leader. A team leader for New York Cares, Brian worked on many community projects including library cleaning days, and preparing food runs for neighborhoods across New York.

Linakis Research Leaders

Michael Agheian
(Psychology, Biology, Neuroscience) A Research Assistant in Yoko Nomura’s psychology lab. Michael conducted research on the links between a child’s head circumference and its impact on sensory development. A leader on campus, he serves as head of Hillel’s Persian Club and as a member of student government.

Chelsea Dahl
(Neuroscience, Biology, Chemistry) A Lab Manager and Research Assistant under the direction of Justin Storbeck at the Queens Affective Neuroscience Lab, Chelsea is interested in the effect of emotion on the change in priorities of affective agenda.

Ioannis Demopoulos
(Biology, Secondary Education) Ioannis has been able to present his research on African puddle frogs in multiple venues, including a convention in evolutionary biology in Canada. He researches under the direction of Stephane Boissinot, while also student-teaching biology in local high schools.

Ariel Fromowitz
(Neuroscience, Chemistry, Psychology) Ariel developed research on the repair process of DNA interstrand in yeast as part of his research in Wilma Saffran’s chemistry lab. Ariel has also worked as an advisor at YACHAD and OHEL Bais Ezra where he assisted autistic students with disabilities.

Brenda Gonzalez
(Biology, Psychology) A prior recipient of the Minority Access to Research Careers scholarship, Brenda serves as a researcher in Alicia Melendez’s psychology lab. Her work has focused on the effects of the overexpression of the BEC-1 protein on tissues.

Yakov Masheev
(Biophysics, Psychology) From his work as a researcher in Uri Samuni’s chemistry lab, Yakov has given presentations on methods of improving drug delivery via nanogels.

Sara Wong
(Biology, Biochemistry, Studio Art) A researcher studying autophagy in Alicia Meléndez’s lab, Sara was selected for the Summer Undergraduate Research Program at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. In addition to her research, she has been a track & Field and cross-country runner since her freshman year at Queens.