

Toyota Drives Students Forward with STEM-Related Scholarships

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PLANO, Texas (July 11, 2017) – For 17-year-old David Thang, growing up an illiterate boy in a small town in Myanmar could have thwarted his dream of becoming a doctor. He had thought escaping a country ruled by the Burmese military – often accused of ruthless and inhumane military tactics – was the hardest obstacle he’d have to overcome.

Then his father became ill and Thang had to work to cover medical bills, only to ultimately watch cancer take his father’s life.

“After my father died, my desire to become a doctor grew even stronger because I want to prevent such a loss,” he says.

With a scholarship from Toyota and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF), life will be a bit easier for Thang and 21 other Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) students as they pursue an education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

The \$5,000 scholarships – awarded to 11 APIA students in Southern California and 11 in North Texas – are offered through a collaborative partnership between Toyota and APIASF, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing college scholarships to APIAs.

Tracey Doi, Toyota group vice president and chief financial officer, is the executive sponsor of the scholarship program, and a strong advocate for Toyota’s employee resource group, TAASiA (Toyota Asian American Society in Alliance).

“I am very excited that Toyota continues to help talented students pursue their dreams,” says Doi. “Toyota is a real champion of diversity and inclusion, and advocates for underserved communities. We’re so proud to recognize the academic excellence and perseverance of these scholars.”

For the third consecutive year, Toyota is driving opportunities for real-world experience by offering a paid internship to one of its Toyota APIASF scholarship recipients. “This unique internship will empower a student with hands-on experience in the workplace,” says Karen Ideno, vice president of product, marketing, corporate social responsibility, and communications at Toyota Financial Services. “It will provide the scholar with the interpersonal skills necessary to succeed on the job, and gain valuable insights into his or her long-term career goals.”

In its sixth year, the scholarship program received over 10,000 student applications. Intended majors for the awarded students range from biochemistry to computer engineering, and school selections from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Thang plans to attend the University of Texas at Arlington.