

Martina Ysabel Miranda Awarded Aspire2STEAM Scholarship Sponsored by Next Step New Start, Inc.

Pivotal life moments ignite Martina Miranda's passion for genomics and genetics research

DES MOINES, IA, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "Through loss, Martina Ysabel Miranda found her purpose," said Cheryl O'Donoghue, CEO at Aspire2STEAM. "She's driven to make an impact in the treatment of cancer and with her incredible work ethic and academic success, we know she'll accomplish her goal."



Martina Ysabel Miranda ASPIRER Scholarship Award Recipient

Martina grew up in the Philippines where her interest in biology and disease was first stirred. She was only a small child, but when a serious outbreak of the tropical disease leptospirosis or "rat fever" endangered her community, it raised her concern and curiosity. Another pivotal time in her early life came when she was

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Martina Ysabel Miranda

living in Dubai. Personal hardship struck when her best friend was diagnosed with the life-threatening disease Alpha Thalassemia Minor, a disorder of the blood and blood-forming organs. These early experiences put Martina on a path to pursue a greater understanding of human disease, but after her mother passed away due to bone cancer, her resolve to pursue the study of genomics and genetics as a career was cemented.

“At the time of my mother’s passing, I thought there wasn’t enough research on the genetic and epigenetic events that

drive tumor cell reversion as cancer presents the problem of resistance to chemotherapies,” said Martina. “I want to focus my attention on this issue. A step I’ve taken to inch towards my goal is

that I'm now interning with the Translational Genomics Research Institute as part of Dr. Marco Magone's 3'UTR lab."

Martina's scholarship was made possible through the generous donation of Next Step New Start, Inc., and its owners Josette Veltri and Wallace Dale. Next Step New Start is a training and coaching organization that focuses on grief care, coping strategies, emotional management, and more.

"We're delighted to share our blessings with Aspire2STEAM, enabling support for scholars like Martina," said Josette Veltri, MS. "We seek to live the words of

Maya Angelou when she said, 'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'"



Martina at summer internship with the Translational Genomics Research Institute

Josette and Martina both found their purpose through the loss of a loved one. When Josette was 26 her husband passed away unexpectedly, and she became the sole provider for her six-year-old son and four-year-old daughter. Three years later her father suddenly died. "These back-to-back, unexpected events made me stronger, and I learned that coping with loss is a skill I could help others learn. Martina has that same inner drive to turn loss into purpose."

Martina is a rising senior at Grand Canyon University, majoring in Biology with an emphasis in Pre-Medicine. She has been on the President's List for academic achievement each semester since starting college, maintaining above a 3.8 grade point average on a scale of 4.0, and has been invited to the Alpha Chi Honors Society, which only allows the top 10% of juniors and seniors in the Honors College. A poet, two of her works "february elegy" and "al nahda, 2015" were published in the Fall 2020 issue of the Merrimack Review and she and her team were recently awarded second place for oral presentations at the 60th Annual American Society for Microbiology Arizona and Nevada conference. She has also presented at Harvard's Boston Bacterial Meeting, Arizona State University's BioSci Southwest Symposium, and multiple events at Grand Canyon University.

After graduation, Martina aspires to continue her education, pursuing advanced studies in oncology research, in addition to serving on diversity committees and volunteering at shelters with underserved children who need tutoring. "Growing up in a developing country, I had always wished for better access to resources and opportunities," said Martina. "And because I love volunteering, I see myself continuing to pay it forward through community outreach, helping others get the same opportunities I had worked hard for these past seven years."

An avid reader and writer, Martina's life has been enriched through the arts. In particular, she finds enjoyment reading novels and non-fiction books focusing on science. "My favorite quote comes from E.O. Wilson's Letters to a Young Scientist, where he says, 'We stood on the shoulders of giants and were able to see a little bit farther,'" said Martina. "I'm thankful to Next Step New Start and Aspire2STEAM for supporting my education so I, too, can see a bit farther."

ABOUT...

[Aspire2STEAM.org](https://www.aspire2steam.org) (formerly known as Mission Sisters Who Work) is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We provide [scholarships](#) and mentoring to young women and girls who are working hard— aspiring—to achieve careers that require education in science, tech, engineering, the arts or math...and they could really use a hand up over the incredible barriers of student debt and rising education costs, and the real, ever-present opportunity barriers that still keep them out of most male-dominated industries. These young women are doing their part, let's help them by doing ours.

[Donate](#) now. Your kindness is a catalyst for change and empowerment for the young women and girls we serve.

Cheryl O'Donoghue

Aspire2STEAM

Cheryl@Aspire2STEAM.org

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