

Amrita Bhasin Awarded Aspire2STEAM Scholarship

Aspiring student startup founder aims to create financial tools for small business owners in the gig economy

DES MOINES, IOWA, USA, October 7, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "Amrita Bhasin has an undeniable passion for start-ups and running her own enterprise," said Cheryl O'Donoghue, CEO at [Aspire2STEAM.org](https://aspire2steam.org). "That, combined with her solid business and technology background and heart for creating solutions for small businesses in marginalized, low-income communities is laudable and, more importantly, needed. We are saying 'yes' to Amrita's dreams with this scholarship award as she finishes up her bachelor's at University of California, Berkeley."



Amrita Bhasin, Aspire2STEAM scholarship recipient

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Amrita Bhasin

Amrita grew up in Silicon Valley. Her interests in business and startups began early and her work has earned her several notable awards and recognition. She was one of only a few percent of selected applicants chosen to attend the 2020 and 2021 International Conference Business Today in New York City. She received full merit scholarships to attend conferences such as Tech Crunch Disrupt and Startup Grind. Her startup Sotira is in SkyDeck HotDesk—a high-tech entrepreneurship startup accelerator and incubator program at the University of California,

Berkeley.

In March 2021 Amrita co-founded Sotira (sotira.co), a consumer SaaS fintech startup, with another student co-founder and a small group of student programmers, also from UC Berkeley. Sotira is a financial tracking, optimization, and pricing discovery tool for small business owners. Said Amrita, "I am very passionate about my startup because I am solving a problem that excites me—financial tools and guidance for small business sellers and resellers who may not be the

most financially savvy and may not have much time for financial management."

In the process of building Sotira, Amrita has interviewed and done user testing with over a hundred users, ideated upcoming product features, managed seven business interns, and pitched at startup contests and showcases. She pitched Sotira and won first place at the Entrepreneurs at Berkeley 2021 Contest and won third place at the TiE Silicon Valley Contest. Amrita was also able to leverage a sales and advertising internship she completed at Google during which she learned how to strategize, pitch, and implement advertising campaigns and effectively sell Google products to small business owners. The internship helped hone her ability to understand consumer mindsets and negotiate deals with clients. "Learning how to explain and market the value of complicated Google products in a concise and compelling way is a skill that will serve me well in my entrepreneurship and founder journey as I continue to grow and scale Sotira."

Amrita is also a passionate writer and has won writing competitions in addition to being published in magazines and literary journals. She has written articles about her startup journey and experiences for the Daily Californian Newspaper—the award-winning student newspaper of the University of California, Berkeley. Amrita is currently working on a novel about her experiences growing up in a suburb of Silicon Valley. "The novel I am working on details the life experiences of a high school student who has lived in Silicon Valley her whole life and is inspired, along with her two best friends, to start building a consumer startup," said Amrita. "Throughout her journey, she encounters a number of challenges and distractions, including various scandals at her high school and legal and financial challenges surrounding building a company."

During this past summer, Amrita lived in an all women's Hacker House in San Francisco where she met many college-aged founders building startups in various industries, and attended events on decentralized finance and cryptocurrency. "The Hacker House network pushed me to keep working on Sotira even when I felt stuck or lost," said Amrita. "Being around so many entrepreneurial people gave me an insight into the creative ways new products are marketed from relatively unknown founders."

A number of the people Amrita met in the Hacker House network were college or high school dropouts with strong opinions that a college education is not necessary if you want to build a startup or company. While Amrita found their perspectives interesting, she's grateful for what she has learned at UC Berkeley. In particular, she credited subjects in the humanities, social sciences, and design as being particularly influential in how she approaches building products and prioritizing features for users.

"My major in sociology has taught me a lot about how to interview and understand users, and this has helped me create a product that targets a pain point being ignored by other competitors," Amrita said. "Moreover, I have studied the gig economy and non-standard work at great length in my sociology classes, and I would not have developed the idea for Sotira without having an in depth understanding of the unique challenges faced by independent contractors

who set their own prices and are not necessarily guaranteed minimum wage by the companies they work for or sell through. I myself have also worked as an independent contractor and as a self-employed small business owner for years."

Ultimately, Amrita's experiences at school and outside of school have prepared her to continue building her own company or work in big tech, and she's excited about what the future holds. "I envision to one day create a product or solution that aims to tackle homelessness in the Bay Area or an issue that prioritizes marginalized communities, low-income communities, women, and communities of color. Whatever the focus, it's important to me that it prioritizes social good."

ABOUT...

Aspire2STEAM.org 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 keep them out of most male-dominated industries. These young women are doing their part, let's help them by doing ours.

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