



# **Tamara Gordon Foundation Scholarship for Students with Disability**

With thanks to The Tamara Gordon Foundation  
2019-20 Impact Report



## About the Award

Thank you for your generosity and for your commitment to making a difference in the lives of students at Ryerson.

The Tamara Gordon Foundation Scholarship for Students with Disability was established in 2019 to support students who have a permanent physical disability, and to recognize their achievements.

We are pleased to announce the inaugural 2019-20 recipients of the Tamara Gordon Foundation Scholarship for Students with Disability.

**Thank you for supporting students at Ryerson who will go on to make a difference in the world.**

## Award Recipients

**Kashif Bin Arif**

*Image Arts Photography Studies, 2021  
Faculty of Communication and Design*

**Kelly Fairney**

*Social Work, 2023  
Faculty of Community Services*

**Kirsten Huber**

*Biology, 2022  
Faculty of Science*

**Connor Spear**

*Nursing, 2020  
Faculty of Community Services*



# Kirsten Huber

Biology, 2020  
Faculty of Science

Thank you, Tamara Gordon Foundation, for recognizing and assisting in the struggles facing students with disabilities, both visible and invisible.

This scholarship will be of great help in allowing me to focus on my academic goals with less worry about how my studies will be financed. I am very much hoping to avoid the burden of student loans.

My sister earned her Master of Spatial Analysis at Ryerson. Her experience was very positive and inspired me to enrol here myself. I am very happy with my decision.

My studies are very intense, but with Ryerson's continued support and guidance, I hope to complete my Bachelor of Science in Biology in 2023. There are so many interesting and exciting areas to explore. I am eager to start the biology co-op program this summer; I believe the experience will help me to narrow the focus on my career options.

**“I would like to thank the Tamara Gordon Foundation for recognizing and assisting in the struggles disabled students face. You have put your belief in my abilities as a student, and for that I am grateful.”**





# Kashif Bin Arif

Image Arts Photography Studies, 2021  
Faculty of Communication and Design

**“I want to thank the Tamara Gordon Foundation for their support to help me develop the best experience possible as an exchange student. I want to change perspectives about deaf and hard of hearing people who have a huge passion for new experiences.”**

My name is Kashif Ahmed Bin Arif. My family is from Pakistan but I was born in California, USA. I moved to Canada in 1998 to see if I fit a mainstream or deaf institute school. Eventually, I failed in the mainstream and moved to the Ernest. C. Drury School for the Deaf for eight years. I decided to transfer to Dante Alighieri Catholic Academy in Toronto which provides a program for Deaf and Hard of hearing students. I graduated there in 2010.

After I graduated high school, I attended Seneca College of Applied Sciences and Arts to study in a Digital Media Arts program. I withdrew from that program at the end of the second year and transferred to Rochester Institute of Technology. I studied there in Graphic Design Production at National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing College and graduated in 2016. Finally, I made the best decision to study in the Photography program at Ryerson University, which is one of the top programs in the field.

Ryerson is one of the top universities that I know of for Photography, offering strong connections with the Toronto International Film Festival. Also, I have many family members who attended Ryerson and they recommended me to apply for the Photography program. I trusted myself and my family members. I want to be an alumnus like them. Ryerson has provided me with accommodations that make learning accessible for me in the School of Image Arts.

I have many paths where I desire to grow. I need to push myself to prove to the world that deaf and hard of hearing can be successful and skilled in their field. A career is supposed to focus on people's experience and skills. Companies can't target or ignore the disability identity of being deaf or hard of hearing. People can learn from people with disabilities.

My personal career goal is focused on documentary/environment portraits as a photographer. However, I do have a passion for working with a big company and used to love National Geographic. Also, Brandon Staton is a photographer who inspires me with his series, Humans of New York. Right now, I want to focus on how that relates to me as a photographer. I want to do, "Deaf Humans of World". I would be able to meet many deaf and hard of hearing people who have successful lives and spread their stories for the world to notice them. I want to show people that I am a strong human who can do anything. I don't intend to see myself as disabled just because I am deaf. Deaf is a word that means I am unable to hear in my ears but I can communicate with people through writing, technology, gestures and body language to help people understand me.

**“Chi-Miigwetch for this award.  
The acknowledgement and  
support is heart warming.”**

## **Kelly Fairney**

Social Work, 2023

Faculty of Community Services

I am a single mother of two beautiful boys, aged three and ten. I work full time in the community, running a program for indigenous youth.

I am currently in my fourth year of the advanced standing Bachelor of Social Work program, graduating this June.

I love my family and my job and I love that I am constantly learning and pushing myself to be better each day.

Living with an invisible disability has its challenges. I do the things I love and manage my pain using traditional medicines and ceremony.

My disability has pushed me to become stronger. I no longer rely on pharmaceuticals and my life is fuller. I am blessed to be where I am and my pain is a statement that I can live through it and I will be the generation to break cycles. Strong women raise strong boys.



# Connor Spear

Nursing, 2020

Faculty of Community Services

Connor is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment wherever he goes. In his work with youth experiencing homelessness he is a continual advocate for the implementation of a relational approach that is trauma informed, strength based, and founded in harm reduction.

Attending Ryerson's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, with the goal of working as a community health nurse, Connor believes that we can positively impact the treatment received by the most marginalized in our society.

In every aspect of his life - from school, to volunteering, to his career - Connor works to challenge adversarial mindsets to create a more accepting world. The funds received from this award go towards allowing Connor to pursue a longer and more robust career.



Thank You for choosing Ryerson.

**For more information, please contact:**

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