



GREAT GRANT STORIES

The Jeanne Sauvé Foundation's Scholars Program *Developing emerging leaders from around the world*

Each year, up to 14 remarkable young leaders from Canada and around the world are invited to Montreal by the Jeanne Sauvé Foundation to participate in the nine-month Sauvé Scholars Program that combines personal and professional development, study and community engagement with social innovation and action.



Eloge Butera (Sauvé Scholar 2009-2010), a legal scholar and a survivor of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, in conversation with Senator Roméo Dallaire and Executive Director Désirée McGraw at Maison Jeanne Sauvé. (Credit: Tristan Brand)

Sauvé Scholars are emerging leaders from a wide range of disciplines – the arts, business, education, engineering, environmental sustainability, human rights, law, medicine, social enterprise, and more. They share a passion for social justice and a proven commitment to leading positive change in their respective communities and countries.

THE ORIGINS OF THE SAUVÉ SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Former Governor General Jeanne Sauvé set out her vision for the *Jeanne Sauvé Youth Foundation* in 1991: to create **an incubator for leadership** through a permanent forum that offered exceptional young people the opportunity to come together to discuss major global issues in complete freedom. Throughout its first decade in the 1990s, the Foundation hosted four large-scale youth conferences, each focused on a critical topic of the time.

With the evolution of electronic media and the proliferation of international conferences on every topic, it became

clear that focusing on a small number of emerging leaders from around the world would better accomplish Madame Sauvé's vision of creating a network of young leaders working to change the world.

So, in 2003, the Jeanne Sauvé Foundation opened the doors of Maison Jeanne Sauvé in Montreal to launch the Sauvé Scholars Program. Since then, the Program has welcomed 114 Scholars from A (Algeria) to Z (Zambia) - so far a total of 47 countries.

Just three examples out of many illustrate the diversity of the Sauvé Scholars. **Saman Ahsan** (2003-2004) of Pakistan became a World Economic Forum Global Leadership Fellow, worked at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and is now the Executive Director of the Montreal-based Girls Action Foundation. **Humaira Habib** (2007-2008) directs Radio Sahar in Afghanistan, a community-based radio station in the western province of Herat. **Gabriel Bran Lopez** (2009-2010), from Guatemala and Canada, is the founder of Youth Fusion,

an award-winning non-profit organization that works with universities to counter Quebec's high drop out rates in secondary schools.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM

At the outset, each Scholar's experience living at Sauvé House was largely self-directed. However, under the leadership of Désirée McGraw, who has served as the Foundation's Executive Director since 2008, and based on emerging best practices from the field of leadership development, the Program has incorporated a greater degree of structure and support into the time and space it already afforded Scholars.

Today, the Program includes individual mentorship and project development support; professional development workshops; internships; private meetings with leaders and decision-makers; public presentations by the Scholars; and a speaker series, including the annual Jeanne Sauvé address launched in 2010 by then Governor-General Michaëlle Jean.

According to McGraw, "The Sauvé Scholars Program is the flagship of the Jeanne Sauvé Foundation. It exists to equip, enable and empower a new generation of global leaders. We select outstanding young leaders from around the world, bring them to Montreal to live and learn together – and we invest in their human, social and intellectual capital to produce tomorrow's generation of social entrepreneurs and leaders – people who will launch and lead new initiatives, NGOs, businesses and indeed governments."

The Sauvé year offers them a unique opportunity to reflect and to take action: Scholars live communally, advance knowledge, develop professionally, participate in conferences, and meet with prominent people in intimate settings. The experience of living together at Sauvé House adds a special dynamic, promoting cultural sensitivity, mutual support and team-work.

Sauvé Scholars benefit from individual academic and professional mentorships – with leading experts in a range of fields – enabling them to benefit from the resources they need to accomplish their goals during their time in Montreal. Academic opportunities are expanding beyond McGill University – the Sauvé Program's academic home – to other Québec universities in the future.

Highly experienced members of the non-academic community also offer professional mentorships. In the 2011-2012 Program year, for example, Sauvé Scholar **Maria Moreno** (an environmental lawyer from Paraguay) conducted a consultancy with the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation, while **Dechen Wangmo** (a journalist from Bhutan) interned with CTV, and **Charlotte Sobolewski** (a Canadian media consultant) worked with celebrated documentary filmmaker Brian McKenna.

A highlight of the Program is the Scholars' annual trip to Ottawa, where they meet with Canada's leading political figures, journalists and strategists as well as senior executives in government and international organizations. The aim is to instill a deep understanding of Canada that Scholars can take back to their respective countries as well as in their work on the international stage.

To ensure a measurable outcome of the Program, Scholars present their proposed individual projects formally at the outset of the year and again as the Program ends, giving a public account of their project's status.

In the 2011-2012 Program, for example, **Joshua Monk Vanwyck's** passion for revitalizing rural communities has taken concrete form in the creation of an online toolbox that community leaders may use to create sustainability plans.

And **Mohammed Shaban**, the first Sauvé Scholar from the Palestinian Territories, arrived with a mandate from the Education Management Unit of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020). He returns to Gaza with a plan to integrate global values of peace and cross-culturalism throughout Palestine's education systems.

Many of the Sauvé Program alumni are very active in keeping in touch with one another. As the Program approaches its 10th anniversary in 2013, a comprehensive database of all Alumni and their career paths to date is being developed, with the intention of reengaging this network of accomplished young people around the world.

To appreciate the breadth and richness of the Scholars' diversity, talents and achievements, browse the [Scholar profiles](#) online.

For more information about Philanthropic Foundations Canada or to read other Great Grant Stories, please visit the [PFC website](#).