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**LAFCU awards \$10K in college scholarships, \$2K to charities**  
*Winner essays: Struggles during pandemic led these high school students to self-reflection, new connections, focus on careers*

LANSING, Mich. — LAFCU has awarded \$10,000 in college scholarships to winners of the credit union’s 14<sup>th</sup> annual Write to Educate Essay Contest and \$2,000 to charities selected by the winners.

The four graduating high school students each earning a \$2,500 scholarship are Aanchal Jain and Berelian Karimian, Okemos; Gavin Isles, Bannister; and Mori Rothhorn, Lansing. Their selection was based on a one-page essay that examines their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic.

“With the essay, we encouraged entrants to reflect on how they were able to succeed despite the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic,” said Alyssa Troub, LAFCU marketing and communications specialist. “Reading their first-person accounts was both regretful and inspiring.

“They were challenged by a new virtual world, but they were resilient. They pivoted. They delved into areas that they otherwise would not have. Because of their actions, they learned about themselves and made big life decisions.”

Pandemic experiences led one winner to consider a career in politics. Another winner will now go into health care, and another selected a career after learning that “long hours in front of a monitor are not for me.” Neuroscience and research are the new focus of one winner who organized a non-violent advocacy group against racism as well as served on her school district’s Mental Health Advisory Committee.



Winners of the 2022 LAFCU Write to Educate Essay Contest are, clockwise from top left, Aanchal Jain, Berelian Karimian, Gavin Isles and Mori Rothhorn.

Each winner was asked to select a charity for a \$500 donation by LAFCU in the winner's name: \$1,000 was awarded to Greater Lansing Food Bank, and \$500 was awarded to both the Capital Area United Way and Capital Area Humane Society. This supports the credit union philosophy of 'People Helping People' and demonstrates of the power of giving back — an important concept for the state's next generation of leaders.

Winners, their high schools, where they will attend college, and their charity selections are:

- Aanchal Jain, Okemos High School, University of Michigan, Capital Area United Way.
- Berelian Karimian, Okemos High School, University of Michigan, Greater Lansing Food Bank.
- Gavin Isles, Fulton High School, Saginaw Valley State University, Capital Area Humane Society.
- Mori Rothhorn, East Lansing High School, University of Michigan, Greater Lansing Food Bank.

The winning essays are at [www.lafcu.com/writetoeducate](http://www.lafcu.com/writetoeducate) and have been published by Lansing State Journal, community sponsor of the scholarship competition, at <https://bit.ly/2022LAFCU-LSJ>.

Eligible entrants were Michigan high school students; they did not need to be a LAFCU member. The Lansing-based credit union is chartered to serve people and businesses throughout Michigan.

### **About LAFCU**

Chartered in 1936, LAFCU is a not-for-profit financial cooperative open for membership to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school in Michigan and to businesses and other entities located in Michigan. The credit union serves 72,000 members and holds over \$970 million in assets. It was named a Best Credit Union to Work For in 2020. LAFCU offers a comprehensive range of financial products and services as well as an expanding complement of financial technology solutions. Members enjoy benefits such as low fees, low interest rates on loans, high yields on savings, discounts, knowledgeable employees and nationwide access to fee-free ATMs. A recipient of the national Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award for credit unions, LAFCU enriches the communities it serves by supporting many organizations and causes. To learn more about LAFCU, call 800.748.0228 or visit [www.lafcu.com](http://www.lafcu.com).

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# Lansing State Journal

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The Lansing State Journal is the community sponsor of the 2022 LAFCU Write to Educate Essay Contest.