



DIFFERENCE MAKERS

The
2021-2022
Tzedek
Grant
Recipients

Founded in 2016, The Davis Academy Alumni Tzedek Grant recognizes and supports charitable initiatives by our graduates. These efforts exemplify The Davis Academy's menschlichkeit value of Tzedek, a Hebrew word that means righteousness or justice. Open to high school and college-age alumni, the grant is an opportunity to advance the efforts of our alum who continue to carry our Davis values out into the world beyond their years at Davis. This year, we are proud to award 2022 Tzedek Grants to two outstanding recipients: **Isabelle Mokotoff '16** and **Caitlyn Pinsker '19**.

Our Davis Academy alumni are making a positive impact wherever their journey takes them. The Davis Alumni Tzedek Grant is a special resource that we extend to help them continue to live the values we instilled during their years at The Davis Academy. Grant recipients receive a financial grant as well as marketing and media support that shines a spotlight on their good work.

Isabelle Mokotoff '16

After years of sending handwritten letters back and forth with her grandfather, their tradition was cut short because of his Parkinson's symptoms. Inspired by her grandfather, Isabelle Mokotoff, a junior at Northwestern University, developed SteadyScrib to enable people with Parkinson's Disease to independently transcribe their thoughts with dignity and ease. As the Founder & CEO, she was profoundly moved by SteadyScrib's organizational purpose. "Because my grandfather lacks writing utensils compatible with his manual dexterity, he can no longer do so many things that he loves. We aim to enable people with Parkinson's to independently transcribe their thoughts because the inability to write can be isolating, debilitating and inconveniencing." At SteadyScrib, Isabelle and her team are personally motivated to eliminate the need for complicated and impersonal communication aids for the 10 million people living with Parkinson's worldwide. Both personal insight and market research informs the SteadyScrib team that their Parkinson's pen set is valuable and desired.

Isabelle and her team began working on this project in September of 2021 and have conceptualized a detailed roadmap toward the beta-testing, manufacture and distribution of their SteadyScrib pen set, as well as prototyped preliminary iterations of the pen set. Most people with Parkinson's experience three main writing-inhibitive symptoms: tremors, slowness of movement and manual rigidity. With this in mind, the SteadyScrib team experimented to determine features that would successfully offset these writing-inhibitive symptoms, selecting three in particular that we expect



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to be fruitful: a magnetic pen and clipboard set which stabilizes the movement from tremors; a weighted grip that accelerates movement; and a reimagined, cuvier pen shape which improves one's ability to grip and mitigates the effects of manual rigidity.

Isabelle plans to use the Tzedek grant award towards buying materials for prototypes of the pen set. Though the SteadyScrib team has access to Northwestern maker spaces, their materials are not fully sufficient to create their desired prototypes. "With the support from the grant, we will be able to order specialized materials like the Liftware spoon, so we can study previous tremor-stabilizing technology, as well as magnetic 3D printing filament, so we can prototype our vision for the future of tremor-stabilizing technology."

Update: "We have been awarded \$10,000 in non-dilutive capital to accelerate our venture this summer! My team is so grateful for the Davis community, as funds from the Davis Alumni Tzedek Grant helped us build a first-generation prototype and laid the foundation for future success."
— Isabelle Mokotoff

Caitlyn Pinkser '19

A junior at Pace Academy, Caitlyn has always wanted to spread positivity to make the world better. Through the Positive Mirroring Project to Support Young Girls she hopes to spread awareness about women's mental health issues and spread positivity. By setting up manned pop-up mirror exchange booths with hand-held mirrors around middle and high schools, participants will

be invited to write generic positive messages and decorate a mirror with drawings that will be given to the next participant. This person will leave that mirror behind for the next person and then take the mirror made by the person before. Before taking the mirror, participants will write at least one positive affirmation on their own mirror. "Body image is an important issue for young girls, and it is said that by the time they reach 17, 78% of young women have body image issues. This issue has gotten worse with Covid-19 and the increased usage of social media, so I hope to address it with my project." She hopes this project will be extended past her time in high school and that it's an opportunity for younger girls to carry on the message of support and awareness for mental health issues. "The simple act of decorating the mirrors for others can serve as a way to spread positivity and remind ourselves and others that they are loved and valued."

As we follow our alumni along their journeys post-graduation, it brings us great joy to see the many ways that they live our values. With more than 1,000 alumni, The Davis Academy takes tremendous pride in knowing that our L.O.V.E. reaches far beyond the walls of our wonderful school. We wish a mazel tov to Isabelle and Caitlyn as they join the list of previous recipients.



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Past Recipients of the Tzedek Grant



Nikki Berne
Class of 2010
Miracle Children



Zoe Light
Class of 2012
Sustainability



Emily Brothman
Class of 2013
Terps Against Hunger



Jacob Cohen
Class of 2013
JAM Bowl



Max Kamean
Class of 2013
JAM Bowl



Max Rubenstein
Class of 2014
Game Givers



David Antonino
Class of 2013
Homelessness



Amalia Haviv
Class of 2018
Nutrition Education



Maya Laufer
Class of 2018
Foster Care Support



Zoe Bober
Class of 2016
Services at
The Refuge House



Josh Isaacs
Class of 2018
Pressure Wish



Alon Rogow
Class of 2018
Pressure Wish