



WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME™

Congratulations to the 2023 Scholarship/Training Grant Winners

The Women Divers Hall of Fame™ (WDHOF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring and raising awareness of the contributions of outstanding women divers. WDHOF provides educational, financial, career and mentorship opportunities to the diving community throughout the world. Each year, WDHOF awards scholarships and training grants that provide financial and educational support to individuals of all ages, particularly those who are preparing for professional careers that involve diving.

The Women Divers Hall of Fame scholarships and training grants are awarded yearly in the spring at Beneath the Sea in Secaucus, New Jersey. The program began in 2002 with three scholarships. This year we had a record number of applications and we will be awarding \$68,400 to 46 individuals who are passionate about our water planet and looking to grow in their knowledge and skills.

A special thank you goes out to Shirley Pomponi, our Scholarship Chair, and her committee members for all of their hard work and many, many hours spent on our program.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Cecelia Connelly Memorial Graduate Scholarship in Underwater Archaeology - \$2500

Sponsored by the family of WDHOF Member Cecelia Connelly



Allyson Ropp

Allyson is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Integrated Coastal Sciences Program at East Carolina University. With a background in maritime history and underwater archaeology, she is a Divemaster and AAUS Scientific Diver and has worked on submerged archaeological sites worldwide. Allyson's dissertation aims to integrate archaeological, microbial ecological, hydrological, and geospatial approaches to construct

and evaluate the relationships between wooden shipwreck stability, microbial community composition, and local hydrological conditions. Through this research, she hopes to illuminate the connectivity between these different factors to better inform wooden shipwreck preservation and provide a holistic approach to underwater resource management.

Susan L. Williams Memorial Fellowships in Seagrass Rehabilitation - 2 fellowships, \$2500 each

Sponsored by family & friends of WDHOF Member Susan L. Williams



Gema Hernan

Gema is a postdoctoral scholar at the Mediterranean Institute of Advanced Studies (Spain). She is interested in understanding the processes and mechanisms that regulate the structure and function of coastal systems, with emphasis on how human activities transform them locally, regionally, and globally. During her Ph.D. research in Marine Ecology, she studied the effects of environmental

changes (ocean acidification, warming, eutrophication) in seagrasses and their trophic interactions. She has worked in seagrass systems in the Mediterranean, the Pacific, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. Currently, she is studying new methodologies to improve the success and resilience of seagrass restoration activities.



Amanda Ho

After earning her degrees in Oceanography and Environmental Science at the University of California at Davis, Amanda has been using her skills as an AAUS certified Scientific Diver to research seagrass meadows in Cambodia. Her goal is to protect and preserve these blue carbon systems due to their ability to sequester carbon and combat

climate change. Amanda will use this award to continue her research to conserve the planet's vital seagrass ecosystems.

Susan L. Williams Memorial Fellowships in Coral Rehabilitation - 2 fellowships, \$2500 each

Sponsored by family & friends of WDHOF Member Susan L. Williams



Sarani Ranaweera

Sarani completed her Bachelor's degree in Mass Media from the University of Colombo (Sri Lanka) and is currently studying for a Bachelor of Law degree at University of London. Sarani holds a PADI Advanced Open-Water Diver certification. She volunteers and coordinates a project for Earth Lanka Youth Network, is a hub leader of Sustainable Ocean Alliance Sri Lanka, and is the Sri Lankan Ambassador of Young

Environmentalists Programme - India. With a previous WDHOF award, she implemented her first coral in situ conservation project in Batticaloa district, Sri Lanka. She is an entrepreneur and is currently looking forward to producing textile materials and products from recycled ocean plastic.



Hillary Smith

Hillary completed her M.Sc. in Marine Biology and Ecology in 2016 at James Cook University (JCU), Australia, with a thesis on the molecular basis of differential morphology and thermal tolerance in a coral species. Since then, she has worked as a research scientist at JCU and recently commenced a Ph.D. at the University of New South Wales. Her

research is focused on the interactions between corals and macroalgae (seaweed), and the possibility to manipulate those interactions to help reefs recover following phase shifts. Her work aims to develop low-technology approaches to manage reefs into the future, which can be implemented by citizen science and community groups.

Bonnie Cardone Memorial Scholarship in Journalism, Graphic Arts, Photography, or Videography - \$1500

Sponsored by WDHOF Members Michele Hall, Karen Straus, & Drey Stockert in memory of WDHOF Member Bonnie Cardone



Sally Dowd

Sally is an Ecology Ph.D. student at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with a passion for photography. She will leverage her photography and marine science skills to communicate the beauty of the ocean, the challenges it faces, and actions being taken to protect it to a broader audience.

Sally recognizes that in fisheries science, there is often a disconnect between researchers, managers, groups that could be impacted by the research, and the public. She intends to help bridge this gap by documenting the relationship of each of these groups to the ocean.

Laurel Clark Sea to Space Physiology Research Grants – 2 grants, \$5000 each

Sponsored by Jonathan Clark in memory of his wife, WDHOF Member Laurel Clark



Giovanna Camacho

Giovanna graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2013, served as a Medical Officer in the Army, boxed in the 2016 Olympic Trials, and became a Divemaster with ten years of dive experience in 2021. She graduated from Embry Riddle University in 2022 and is pursuing her Ph.D. in Systems Engineering at the University of Virginia. Giovanna

seeks to create equipment/processes to enhance human capabilities and prevent injuries. She will create a vibrotactile navigation system to improve diver navigation and orientation. This technology can be adapted to military ground and air operations, avatar embodiment, health impairments, and space walks.



Rhiannon Brenner

Rhiannon graduated from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington with a degree in Biological Anthropology and Minors in Environmental Science and International Studies. She has been diving since she was 16 and is committed to combining her love for human physiology and diving into a life-long career. As a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of

Auckland (New Zealand), Rhiannon will continue to investigate the ways human variation plays into our physiological response to pressure and impacts our risk under water.

Graduate Scholarship in Marine Conservation – \$2000

Sponsored by WDHOF Member Meg Donat



Sofia Ferreira

Sofia is a Master's student at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and a member of the Multi-Scale Environmental Graphical Analysis (MEGA) Lab. She is an AAUS Scientific Diver and NAUI Master Diver, and her focus is coral reef research with the application of innovative technologies such as Structure-from-Motion Photogrammetry. Her

thesis aims to decipher new relationships among reef fish and corals using a trait-based approach. With this approach, instead of classifying organisms based on their taxonomic identity, Sofia is grouping them based on similar physical and behavioral characteristics (i.e., traits). After completing her Master's degree, Sofia plans to continue with her education by attaining a Ph.D.

Graduate Scholarship in Marine Conservation – \$2000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOF scholarship fund



Maya Powell

Maya is a Ph.D. student at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in the Castillo & McCoy labs. She is an AAUS scientific diver and is conducting her dissertation research in Curacao in collaboration with Dr. Verena Schoepf. Her work aims to understand the effects of extreme and marginal environments on coral microbiome and symbiont

communities, and how these communities may aid in acclimatization and resilience. Maya is excited to use this research to identify beneficial consortiums of microbes that will allow for development of coral probiotics to aid in coral restoration. Find out more here: <https://mayapowell.weebly.com/>.

Rachel Morrison Memorial Graduate Scholarship in Marine Conservation - \$2000

Sponsored by John & Jeanne Morrison in memory of their daughter Rachel



Riley Jones

Riley is a Master's student at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) where she is researching the impacts of anthropogenic noise pollution on garibaldi territorial behavior and reproductive output. With this research, Riley aims to highlight potential impacts of anthropogenic noise pollution on a fish species that uses sound

to communicate. Since becoming a Scientific Diver in 2022, Riley has participated in many scuba-based research projects including the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) Mitigation Monitoring Program. With this award, Riley will fund an entire field season on Catalina Island as well as build a model garibaldi to use in her research.

If you are interested in further information about the scholarship programs or would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please visit our website at:

www.wdhof.org

Max Benjamin Memorial Graduate Scholarship in Marine Conservation - \$2000

Sponsored by WDHOF Member Cecilie Benjamin in memory of her husband, Max



Kailey Pascoe

Kailey is a scientist, diver, and lifelong ocean enthusiast from Kāneʻohe, Oʻahu. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Geography at Arizona State University while based in Hilo, Hawaiʻi. As a Native Hawaiian scientist, she can seamlessly stitch together her specializations of coral reef ecology, 3D photogrammetry, and scientific diving with a perspective that creates space for traditional

knowledge in a heavily western science-driven world. Native Hawaiians consider coral to be their first ancestor that brings both life and death to people and the islands. She aims to honor her heritage by using science and innovative technologies to understand how coral reefs respond to climate change, and how we can incorporate science into management to stem this rapid decline.

Captain Wayne Hasson Memorial Graduate Scholarship in Applied Marine Conservation - \$2000

Sponsored by Sea of Change Foundation (WDHOF Member Anne Hasson in memory of her husband, Wayne)



Torrey Gorra

Torrey is an IMBRSea student at Ghent University, interested in marine conservation. She is currently conducting her Master's research with the NGO, Marine Conservation Cambodia (MCC). Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a pressing concern in the Cambodian Sea. Years of unsustainable fishing practices have seriously degraded much of the benthic habitat, contributing

to reduced biodiversity and water clarity throughout Kep Archipelago. She is utilizing meiofauna techniques (sediment cores) and visual census surveys to understand the role that oysters, fish, and other filter feeders play on artificial reefs (implemented by MCC to reduce trawling and simultaneously boost biodiversity), trawled areas and remnant bivalve and seagrass beds. This study will serve as a baseline for an oyster restoration project later by MCC.

Undergraduate Marine Research Internship in Marine Biology - \$1000

Sponsored by WDHOF Members Dr. Devonna Shoemaker & Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski



Makenna Middleton

Makenna is a junior at Maine Maritime Academy and is double-majoring in Marine Biology and Small Vessel Operations. Her appreciation for marine life led her to pursue the world of scuba. She is working towards finishing her Advanced Open Water Diver through PADI. This summer she will conduct her internship in Anacortes, Washington, studying three marine invertebrate species.

TRAINING GRANTS

Instructor Advanced Education Training Grant - \$2000

Sponsored by WDHOF Member Jeanne Bear Sleeper



Haley Davis

Haley is a PADI Master Scuba Diver Trainer and a marine scientist studying the environmental patterns which influence coral reef health and communicating important findings to community members. Haley believes that divers can be some of the most important advocates for conservation, as they witness changes in this ecosystem firsthand. Through this grant, Haley aims to expand her repertoire of Project

AWARE specialty instructor certifications, as well as taking steps toward her aspiration to become an AAUS Dive Safety Officer. It is her hope that through education, hard work, and advocacy, divers worldwide can preserve the planet's most valuable biological resource.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Recreational - \$1000

Sponsored by WDHOF Member Bonnie Toth Advertising & Design



Bibiana Martinez

An eighth grader at Seven Rivers Christian School, Bibiana started scuba diving when she was 12 years old. She immediately became a member of SCUBAnauts International, a scientific diving community for teens. As a Naut, Bibiana has participated in coral restoration in the Florida Keys by planting coral, conducting photogrammetry, and helping with Earth Day cleanup. Some of the

SCUBAnaut trips require the students to have an advanced certification. With this grant, Bibiana plans to get Advanced, Nitrox, and Rescue certifications so she can participate in more dive trips to continue improving the environment.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Recreational - \$1000

Sponsored by Ocean Wishes (WDHOF Member Margo Peyton) and donations to WDHOF



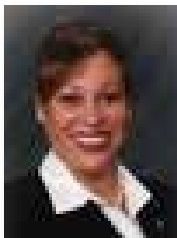
Sarah Elkin

Sarah is a marine scientist studying within the International Master of Science in Marine Biological Resources at the University of Ghent, Belgium. She is currently undertaking her thesis research on how patron - client relationships in a climate change hotspot in Mexico are affecting climate change adaptations of fishers. While conducting her Master's research, Sarah has learned how important diving

can be not only in research, but also in inspiring curiosity for the ocean. Her interests are working within science communication and education to bridge the gap between research and the public, having recently designed and started a social media account with fellow students to engage a wider audience in marine science. Sarah plans to use this grant to obtain her Rescue Diver certification, another step in her journey to improve her diving skills, with the aim to use them to communicate the wonders of the ocean to those around her.

Zale & Saxon Memorial Advanced Dive Training Grant – Recreational - \$1000

Sponsored by friends of Suzie Dudas and WDHOFF Member Evelyn Dudas



Pamela Chapman, Ph.D.

Pamela has over 25 years of experience in the education profession. She currently is an Assistant Professor at Tennessee State University. Dr. Chapman shares her love of the ocean with all the students she encounters. As owner of Global Educational Opportunities, she uses virtual reality to bring the ocean to students in under-resourced schools.

Serving on the Executive Board of the National Association of Black Scuba Divers, Dr. Chapman seeks to create a pipeline for youth from marginalized communities interested in scuba diving and will use this grant to advance her diving skills.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Recreational - \$1000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOFF



Valeria Valdez

Valeria is an Environmental Engineer graduated from the Catholic University of Honduras. She is passionate and enthusiastic about coral reef and marine conservation. Her happy place is the ocean. Currently, Valeria is working for the Bay Island Conservation Association (BICA) chapter Utila as a research coordinator leading the conservation efforts

against Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease. With this grant, she plans to become a Rescue Diver and improve the quality of her diving skills, the opportunities that it brings, and ensuring her and her group's safety.

Advanced Dive Training Grants – Professional – 3 grants, \$1000 each

Sponsored by Erin Spengler in honor of WDHOFF Member Diedre Sullivan



Katherine Walde

Kate is a recently separated U.S. Coast Guard veteran, student, and ocean enthusiast. Growing up in Southern California, her passion for the ocean drew her over the horizon and below the surface. Following medical school, she plans to pursue a career in dive medicine. She received her Open-Water certification in 2014 and plans to use this

grant to complete her Open-Water Instructor course. As an instructor, she aims to inspire other women into the water.



Ashlynn Overly

Ashlynn recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and a minor in Marine Science from the University of Hawaii. She is a certified Scientific Diver who has participated in several coral reef monitoring programs on Hawaii Island. Her goal is to attend graduate school where she can continue to research coral reefs and

gain diving experience. She plans to increase her professional diving experience as well by completing Divemaster training and becoming an instructor for Scientific Divers. She wants to use her interdisciplinary experience gained through Divemaster training to promote citizen science and increase environmental stewardship for all divers.



Dehan Nanayakkara, Upekha Kottege, Amali Wickramasinghe, Benthota Dayangika (team of 4)

Dehan is a fourth-year undergraduate in Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, University of Ruhuna in Sri Lanka. He is an ocean enthusiast who loves to explore its hidden beauty. Dehan aspires to study biophysical ocean modelling for his Master's and Doctorate degrees.



Upekha is interested in studying marine spatial planning and climate resilient cities with infrastructure research and projects. She earned her first degree at University of Moratuwa and is working as a town planner for National Physical Planning Department Sri Lanka. She was involved in the National Adaptation Strategy prepared for UNFCCC, Sri Lanka.

Amali is working as a research assistant at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura to conduct research in Aquatic Bioresources. Concerned about the environment and climatic issues, her goal is to work in biology, ecology, and conservation of marine ecosystems.

Benthota is studying marine animal species identification, conservation and aquaculture with a focus on mangrove ecosystems, corals, sponges and wetland birds. She has conducted projects in marine habitat restoration through landscaping and conservation, coral reef restoration, and mangrove rehabilitation.

Advanced Dive Training Grants – Professional – 3 grants, \$1000 each

Sponsored by donations to WDHOFF scholarship fund



Katherine Eltz

Katherine is a senior at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill studying biomedical engineering and marine science. She conducts research in bubble formation and circulation in decompression sickness, as well as marine mammal decompression sickness avoidance. Additionally, Katherine volunteers with the Divers Alert Network, helping with field studies related to diving physiology and safety. She will remain in this field and get her Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering at UNC. The WDHOFF Advanced Dive Training Grant will allow Katherine to become even more involved in her field and give her skills she can use in her future career.



Elise Hayden

Elise fell in love with the underwater world at an early age by visiting aquariums, watching nature documentaries, and hearing her family's diving stories. Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she grew up on the shores of Lake Michigan where she was certified as a PADI Open Water diver in 2016. As a marine scientist, Elise has done lots of "snuba," snorkeling, and freediving but hasn't done any scuba diving. With this grant, she plans to jump back into scuba with the goal to use her new skills throughout her marine research career.

Advanced Dive Training Grants – Professional – 3 grants, \$1000 each - continued

Sponsored by donations to WDHOF scholarship fund



Sarah Yerrace

Sarah started diving in 2013 and has since gained experience in many types of diving: cold and warm water, recreational diving, scientific diving, and aquarium diving under commercial standards. Sarah finds the most joy when her passions of diving, conservation, education, and research all come together. As a current Divemaster, Sarah will be able to pursue Instructor training with the support of this grant. She aims to help connect more people to life

under water through scuba training, leading to the next generation of conservationists, while also breaking down barriers that have prevented traditionally excluded groups from participating in scuba.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Technical - \$1000

Sponsored by TDI (WDHOF Member Stephanie Miele)



Nicole Bucchino Grinnan

Nicole is a Research Associate and underwater archaeologist with the Florida Public Archaeology Network, a program of the University of West Florida. She is currently working on a Ph.D. with the University of St. Andrews to explore how coastal communities in Florida value local cultural heritage sites on land and under water. Since 2020, Nicole has served as Membership Chair for the American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS).

Currently, she is also working with East Carolina University, the Task Force Dagger Special Operations Foundation, and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to train military veteran citizen scientists in the recovery of remains of fallen United States service members engaged in the World War II Battle of Saipan. Nicole is passionate about advocating for the preservation of underwater heritage sites across the world; one of the most meaningful aspects of her career has been the opportunity to educate both divers and non-divers about that heritage.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Technical - \$1000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOF



Allison Klein

Allison is a first-year Ph.D. student in the Coral Reef Health and Ecology Laboratory at FAU's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. Allie will be utilizing this grant to receive Mixed-Gas CCR training to increase her skills on the O2ptima rebreather. This advanced dive training will make Allie a crucial participant on the Voss Lab's technical dive team for mesophotic reef research. She is

looking forward to the opportunities that will emerge for her through this training as well as exploring these mesophotic coral reef ecosystems.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Scientific - \$1000

Sponsored by Blue Green Expeditions (WDHOF Member Faith Ortins)



Serina Moheed

Serina is a first-year Ph.D. student studying marine disease ecology at the University of California, Davis. After earning her B.S. from Cornell University, Serina worked for two years as a Research Technician in the Infectious Disease Department at Massachusetts General Hospital, learning about the importance of targeted research questions regarding human health.

Her love for the ocean brought her back to academia for graduate school, where she plans to conduct research on the drivers behind seagrass wasting disease, and how ocean health impacts coastal communities. Serina is Open-Water certified, and is thrilled to use this grant for her Scientific Diver certification, allowing her to explore more complex research questions and create collaborations within the diving community.

Advanced Dive Training Grants – Scientific – 2 grants, \$1000 each

Sponsored by donations to WDHOF



Lisa Goberdhan

Lisa is a Ph.D. candidate in Marine Biology at the School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University in North Wales, specialising in tropical coral reef ecology. Her research focuses on coral rubble habitats and their functional role on coral reefs in Seychelles and Palmyra Atoll. Currently a PADI Rescue diver, Lisa will use her grant to advance her

training to a PADI Divemaster qualification.



Nicholle Amador

Nicholle is a biologist who graduated from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras with a cum laude distinction. Since her first year of college, she has wanted to explore the underwater world, feeling a connection with the ocean. This led her to seek opportunities in the Bay Islands, where she started working for a local NGO, Kanahau Wildlife

Conservation Organization on the island of Utila. She oversees the Environmental Education and Community Outreach program, which includes the development of a project to establish a lionfish jewelry market in Utila. This project seeks to support the community, control the lionfish as an invasive species in the Mesoamerican reef area of Utila, and provide sustainable souvenir alternatives for tourists. Through this project, she became an Advanced Open-Water diver and a proficient lionfish hunter. She wants to improve her diving skills to carry out underwater scientific activities and continue working in the conservation of Honduras.

Jim Leffard Memorial Training Grant for Underwater Photography - \$1500

Sponsored by Rosemary Kurtii



Sydney Bell

Sydney is an M.S. candidate in Biological Sciences at Florida Atlantic University-Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. Her research focuses on using coral and algal symbiont genetics to inform restoration on Florida's coral reef. Currently an AAUS Scientific Diver and PADI Rescue Diver, Sydney will use this grant to deepen her understanding of the specific challenges associated with taking photos in the underwater world, as well as increasing her ability to take striking images for science communication through her own sustainable apparel company, Tidal Tees Apparel.

Advanced Dive Training Grant – Photography - \$1000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOFF



Madison Churchill

Madison holds a B.A. in Environmental Policy from Western Washington University. She is a scientific illustrator and an avid cold-water diver. She lives near the Salish Sea and works as the conservation coordinator and scuba instructor at Seattle Dive Tours, a local dive shop. She is looking forward to expanding her dive skills with underwater photography courses and using those images in her artwork. When she is not in the water, she also works with a non-profit ocean science organization called SeaDoc Society and volunteers as a Scientific Diver with Reef Check and the Seattle Aquarium.

Dottie Frazier Memorial Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOFF in memory of WDHOFF Member Dottie Frazier



Sandali Samarage and Randi Hansima

Sandali (team leader) and Randi (teammate) are both from Sri Lanka and have a keen interest in marine environmental conservation and research. Sandali is a graduate student from Ocean University of Sri Lanka, and Randi is a third-year undergraduate student at the same university pursuing a B.Sc. in Coastal and Marine Resources Management.



They are currently involved in numerous volunteer programs for marine conservation as well as various research projects based on their current studies. Sandali is an active member of Young Zoologist Association (YZA), and Randi is the newly appointed university ambassador of the Women in Ocean Science (WOS) network. It has always been their dream to learn how to dive to diversify their studies in marine science and widen their field with

underwater research. They are so excited about receiving the WDHOFF dive grant and are ready to follow their underwater aspirations.

Zig and JoAnn Zigahn Memorial Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOFF in memory of WDHOFF Founder Zig Zigahn and WDHOFF Member JoAnn Zigahn



Amila Chinthani Kaluthanthrige

Amila is a veterinarian who has completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Veterinary Science from the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka. Her passion is working with marine mammals, especially dolphins and dugongs. She is looking forward to contributing more to the field after finishing her Ph.D. research on marine wildlife conservation training, for which learning to dive will be essential.

Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by SDI (WDHOFF Member Stephanie Miele)



Angelo Perez

Angelo is a 55-year-old lifelong resident of Chicago who has overcome a traumatic spinal cord injury in 1991. He has been training in the pool with Diveheart since November of 2021 and will be SDI certified by May 2023. Active in the disabled sport community, Angelo wants to share the wonders of marine life and learn how to preserve different ecosystems through photography and communication. He will share with other people with disabilities how scuba helps him relax and is a form of therapy. He wants others to see how scuba can contribute to a happier and healthier life.

Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by WDHOFF Member Patti Gross



Lys Isma

Lys is a Ph.D. student at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Science. Her research focuses on immune responses of corals to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD). Her dissertation will focus on one main question: when corals get sick, how are they battling? Her goal is to contribute to a better understanding of this disease.

Zale & Saxon Memorial Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by friends of Suzie Dudas & WDHOFF Member Evelyn Dudas



Zara Fatima

Zara completed her astronaut field training in Egypt when she was 15 years old. Having been lecturing at universities since then, she inaugurated global celebrations for the UN World Space Week 2022 and is the youngest person in the world to have undergone graduate-level training in all aspects of astrophysics, astrobiology, planetary science, cosmology, geology, orbital studies, and space physiology. Since Zara aims to follow this interdisciplinary approach towards astronaut operations into her career as a professional, she hopes that familiarizing herself with weightlessness through rigorous mobility certifications by diving would allow her to effectively apply her scientific practices in space.

Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by Ocean Wishes (WDHOF Member Margo Peyton) & donations to WDHOF



Sarah Webster

Sarah has always had a love for the natural world and the animals that inhabit it. She went to Utah State University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management with a Fisheries Science minor. While attending college, she was able to participate in many surveys, pushing her towards her future careers. She has worked for the State of

Utah under their Wildlife Resources department studying the Critically Endangered June Sucker as well as the native Cutthroat Trout. She then moved to work for the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium as their first-ever female Life Support Technician. By receiving this grant, she aims to face new challenges, push new boundaries, and show what women can do in male-dominated industries.

Basic Dive Training Grant - \$1000

Sponsored by donations to WDHOF



Serena Miewald

Serena graduated from high school in 2022 with an Associate's degree of Art in Science. She is currently enrolled at the University of Washington working on her Bachelor's degree in Marine Biology. In her spare time, she hikes with her friends and enjoys the relaxing and beautiful nature. To appreciate nature even more, diving will give her the opportunity to

see a different part of the world. Diving will expand her job opportunities while allowing her to see what more can be done under the water.

Basic Dive Training Grants – 2 grants, \$1000 each

Sponsored by Erin Spengler in honor of WDHOF Member Diedre Sullivan



Erika Pirozok

Erika is a senior at the University of Washington studying Marine Biology and Quantitative Sciences. She currently works at the Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine as a Zebrafish Care Technician but is looking to put her newly found diving skills to use for field research. Once she is officially Open-Water certified, she will continue

on to gain her Scientific Diving certification to pursue her passions in marine conservation. Erika aims to earn a Ph.D. in Marine Science and Conservation, but for now, she will use diving to explore her favorite blue ecosystem.



Joanne Salzer

Fascinated by the ocean's beauty and mysterious wonders, Joanne gained a curiosity about marine life at an early age. She carried that curiosity into her academic studies and earned a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science with a marine concentration. Since graduating from Northeastern University in 2021, Joanne has been researching fish virology at

the USGS Western Fisheries Research Center in Washington state. Her research interests primarily lie in aquatic disease ecology, and she plans to incorporate scuba diving into her future graduate work. Joanne aspires to become a scuba-certified scientist and conserve marine species for which disease poses a serious threat.

Ella Jean Morgan Memorial Dive Training Grant for Young Women - \$1000

Sponsored by Frank Boulanger in memory of his wife, WDHOF Member Ella Jean Morgan



Anna Kovtunen

Anna is a high school senior from Vancouver, BC, passionate about youth leadership within ocean conservation. She is an alumna of Ocean Wise's YouthToSea program where she has spent two years organizing conservation-based initiatives. As part of her work, Anna co-founded a campaign advocating for stronger Marine Protected Area policy and

organized a climate festival for local small businesses and organizations. Anna aims to use her grant to support youth-led environmentalism within her community, continue her MPA advocacy, and work in kelp reforestation. In the future, she plans to study computational biology and how technology can advance conservation efforts.

Diver Medical Education Grants – 2 grants, valued at \$1200 each

Sponsored by The Diver Medic (WDHOF Member Chantelle Newman)



Tiffany Norberg

Tiffany is a Swedish professional Technical Diving Instructor (scuba and rebreather), who specializes in Nordic cold-water exploration. She co-founded Baltic Circle Diving to share her passion with other divers who are curious to know more about colder water diving. Tiffany is a key member of Team Badewanne, who discovers and documents wrecks in the Baltic

Sea, where she applies her experience in designing training programs for athletes to dive logistics and safety planning in underwater exploration. Tiffany will use her grant to augment her dive medicine knowledge which will increase her ability to support research expeditions.



Ioannis Choulis

Ioannis has completed his integrated Master's degree in Ichthyology & Aquatic Environments from the University of Thessaly in 2019 and a Master's degree in Marine Biology from the University of Algarve in 2022. His first dive was due to his academic curiosity in 2017, but soon after, he was captivated by this underwater experience. In the following years, he

strived to extend his knowledge and skills by reaching the SSI Divemaster & GUE Scientific Diver level, while also participating in several diving programs (ScienceDiverEU, DANEurope Internship). This training grant will enrich his diving medicine education, thus improving the safety of himself and his diving buddies, while also opening the door to the Diving Safety Officer level.

Hugh Fletcher Memorial Training Grant to Assist the Disabled to Dive - \$1000

Sponsored by friends of Hugh Fletcher (WDHOF Founder/Member Kathy Weydig) and donations to WDHOF

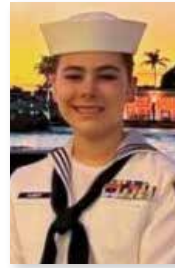


Elsa Cockburn

Elsa is a PADI Seal Team member and a power chair user with cerebral palsy which means she is unable to walk independently. Diving during her Seal Team experience has helped her mentally and physically by giving her the opportunity not always offered to people with a disability. The Seal Team created an environment in which she was safe and secure, and at the end of each session she could not wait to get back in the water again. Her favorite part of the Seal Team was mastering hovering because it gave her a freedom she cannot experience on land. She wants to continue learning to dive so that she can experience weightlessness and see dolphins in the wild.

Dive Training Grant for Candidates in ROTC, JROTC, military academy, Sea Scout, or Sea Cadet - \$1000

Sponsored by Women's Scuba Association (WDHOF Founder/Member Jennifer King)



Victoria Huber

Victoria is 14 years old and loves the ocean. She is committed to marine conservation and stewardship of our blue planet, acting as an Ambassador for the Marine Conservation Network and a NOAA Ocean Guardian Youth Ambassador. She is also a Water Challenge Ambassador with EarthEcho, a network of young people passionate about protecting local waterways. As a Young Marine Biologist at the Marine Biological Association in the UK, she spoke at the 2021 Summit, talking about the "Hidden Ocean." She is a member of the US Naval Sea Cadet Corps, where she holds the rank of Petty Officer 3rd class. Her goal is to promote an understanding of the ocean's influence on us and our influence on the ocean, strengthening youth involvement in diving. This grant is an exceptional opportunity that will allow her to attain her Advanced Dive Certification and some additional dive gear.

WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME MISSION

The Women Divers Hall of Fame's two-part mission includes:

- Recognizing women divers who have made outstanding contributions to the exploration, understanding, safety and enjoyment of our underwater world and
- Supporting the underwater world and its associated careers by promoting opportunities for women and men in diving through scholarships, internships and mentorship opportunities and a worldwide network of industry contacts.

To learn more about the Women Divers Hall of Fame, visit www.wdhof.org