

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hoover Presidential Foundation Announces 2025 Uncommon Student Award Recipients

WEST BRANCH, IOWA —The Hoover Presidential Foundation honored 15 Iowa high school seniors on Saturday, November 15 during the 28th Annual Herbert Hoover Uncommon Student Award Presentation Day, held in the Rooftop Ballroom at the Courtyard by Marriott in University Heights. Students presented their year-long, self-directed community projects to judges and guests, exemplifying President Hoover’s belief in the “*opportunity to rise to leadership, in other words, to be uncommon.*”

Each finalist received a \$1,500 scholarship toward their post-secondary education, with additional awards presented to students whose projects demonstrated exceptional innovation, leadership, and impact. Students are selected for the program based on the merit of their project idea and plan, not grades, test scores, or financial need.

Four Students Awarded \$10,000 Scholarships

The Foundation proudly awarded four top scholarships of \$10,000 each to:

- **Ethan Meyer**, Liberty High School – *Stewards of Iowa: A Documentary by Ethan Meyer*
- **Gracie Hutchins**, Waukee Northwest High School – *InterpASL: American Sign Language Software Interpreter*
- **Henry Zou**, Johnston High School – *DeGLS—AI Assisted Detection System for Gray Leaf Spot Disease*
- **Natalie Schroeder**, Calamus-Wheatland High School – *"Chat with Nat" Agriculture Education Videos*

These students’ projects represent outstanding creativity, community impact, and alignment with Herbert Hoover’s ideals of service and innovation.

Mariah Becker Volunteer Leadership Award

The Mariah Becker Volunteer Leadership Award, a \$1,000 honor recognizing exceptional volunteerism and leadership, was awarded to:

- **Shanza Sami**, Iowa City West High School – *SPECO: Environmental Solutions + Education*

Sami's project advances emission-reduction tools, STEM access, and youth education across urban and rural Iowa communities. This award is presented in memory of Mariah Becker, a 2000 Uncommon Student whose legacy continues to inspire Iowa youth.

About the Uncommon Student Award Program

Launched in 1998, the Uncommon Student Award encourages Iowa high school juniors to design and execute a project of personal passion and community impact. Finalists participate in a summer mentorship weekend in West Branch to develop skills, refine goals, and deepen their understanding of Herbert Hoover's commitment to service. In their senior year, students return to present the outcomes of their projects to judges and the public.

The program is funded entirely through private donations and administered by the Hoover Presidential Foundation, a nonprofit organization supporting the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum and the Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch. Additional program information and applications are available at www.UncommonStudent.org.

About the Hoover Presidential Foundation

The Hoover Presidential Foundation promotes and supports the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, National Historic Site, and other programs that enhance the understanding of Herbert Hoover as president and humanitarian.