

Press Release

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THE BLACK HEART FOUNDATION

## Black Heart Foundation charity awards 500<sup>th</sup> scholarship

The Black Heart Foundation (BHF), a UK charity founded by businessman and philanthropist Ric Lewis who was previously named the most influential black person in Britain, has funded its 500th scholar - adding 400 additional scholars in the last 24 months following the hugely successful [‘Each Day. Every Day’ campaign](#).

The BHF was established in 2000 with the primary aim of removing barriers to aspiration and achievement for young people. The Black Heart Scholarship Programme, which launched in 2013, provides gap-funding for young people from under-resourced and under-represented groups who would otherwise not be able to achieve their ambitions or potential through Further or Higher Education.

In July 2020, the Foundation launched the ‘Each Day. Every Day.’ crowdfunding campaign in response to the murder of George Floyd and worldwide Black Lives Matter protests. Its goal was to raise £500,000 from friends and supporters in order to double the number of scholars from 100 to 200 by the end of 2021. The total raised to date now stands at £1.8 million, including a substantial donation from the Foundation’s board of trustees and [£500,000 of funding from award-winning grime artist Stormzy’s Merky Foundation](#).

The programme plans to continue awarding more scholarships but is also seeking partners to get involved so that more young people can be supported and relieved from the financial burden and stress that students encounter when going to university.

**Founder and Chairman of The Black Heart Foundation, Ric Lewis, said:** *“We were delighted by the support the Foundation received during the ‘Each Day. Every Day.’ campaign. Every pound donated has gone straight to the scholars, accounting for around half the scholarships we have awarded over the past 18 months. But there is much more work to do. We had over 3000 applications last year. The need is huge and expanding rapidly as pressures mount on the cost of living for students and their families. We will continue to need significant funds to match our own contributions so that we can continue to empower a new*

*generation of young people and level the playing field of aspiration and achievement.”*

*He added: “We are on the hunt for a like-minded corporate partner committed to match our Board’s financial commitment to take our work to the next level and to create a lasting legacy and a new cohort of talent in the UK from the communities that have been left behind for far too long. We welcome any interested companies and organisations to get in touch with the Foundation.”*

For Black Heart scholars, being relieved of the financial stress and burden they and their families bear has allowed many of them to solely concentrate on their studies.

**Richard, an undergraduate Chemistry student at University of Oxford, said:** *“I was elated when I received the news that I had been awarded the scholarship as I knew it would relieve the financial burden that living away from home can often cause. Embodying the values of the Black Heart Foundation is extremely important to me and this includes giving back to the community. I have done this through the creation of a website designed to demystify the Oxbridge experience and bridge the information gap between applicants.”*

**Jeno, undergraduate Software Engineering student at UWE Bristol, said:** *“Receiving this scholarship from the Black Heart Foundation meant that I do not have to stress about funding my basic living costs for the remaining time of studying at university. I am able to focus only on achieving the best results I can in my studies along with gaining an appropriate learning outcome from my course that would allow me to begin my career in software development. As a Black Heart scholar, I am able to fulfil my potential in education that would hopefully lead to achieving my career aspirations after completing my course.”*

To date, 75% of the BHF’s scholars come from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and 66% of scholars identify as female. Scholars have studied at over 130 academic institutions from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Bristol and Loughborough to the commercial flight school at Aer Lingus and The Urdang Academy of performing arts in London. The Foundation has already allocated more than £7.5 million in grants, awards and scholarships.

**ENDS**

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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## Notes to Editors:

1. The Black Heart Foundation is a UK and US registered charity, founded in 2000.  
See: <https://blackheartfoundation.org>
2. The Black Heart Foundation is founded and chaired by entrepreneur and philanthropist Ric Lewis. He is a Board member of several charities, including the Institute of Imagination (Chairman), Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation and Eastside Young Leaders' Academy. He is also Founder and Chairman of Tristan Capital Partners, a London-based real estate investment management company with €10.5+ Billion in Assets under Management. He was named as the most influential black Briton in The Powerlist 2019.
3. The Black Heart Scholarship programme is open to all young people who are hardworking, under-resourced and ambitious. Applicants must submit a personal essay providing a brief summary of their educational activity and what they hope to do after graduating / finishing their course or programme, a general application form and a budget sheet presenting a clear case of financial need as well as any grants, bursaries, parental contributions, local authority assistance, loans and other scholarships.
4. The Black Heart Foundation was the first UK charity to receive funding from the Merky Foundation's £10m fund to tackle racial inequality and injustice following Stormzy's commitment to donate to organisations engaged in the fight for racial equality and social justice over the next 10 years. For further information about the Merky Foundation: <https://www.merkyfoundation.org.uk/>