



CITY COLLEGE OF
SAN FRANCISCO

MY
KHONG

*Like a grain of sand
Among waves and time
Becoming, undefined
And somehow, it aligned
For all of you, I am grateful & aligned!*

While this document presents the full scholarship proposal, an interactive version with visual storytelling and expanded design elements can be accessed here:

[\[https://amelia-khongmy.github.io/ONE-scholarship/\]](https://amelia-khongmy.github.io/ONE-scholarship/)

amelia khong

ONE Scholarship

I was born in a small Vietnamese seaside village to an underprivileged family. After my mom miscarried my oldest twin brothers, she endured an emergency C-section to give birth to my older brother, leaving our family in financial and emotional distress. When I was born naturally six years later - it felt like a blessing, the one I carried with a deep sense of gratitude. However, life at home was far from safe. My uncle-in-law, who is my aunt's husband, came into my room one night to sexually harass me. I was panicked and afraid. For many, those books from school were for studying or reading leisure. For the 12-year-old me then, those books were stacked against my bedroom door each night to prevent my uncle-in-law from getting inside my room to repeat his action. From that moment on, it seems that education was my only way to escape.

At 18, I managed to leave for Ho Chi Minh City thanks to university entrance exams. For the first time after so many sleepless nights, I slept without fear. One night during my freshman year, my father called to declare to me that he could no longer afford my tuition fee because he was bankrupt. I definitely do not want to go back home. That was when the past caught up to me. My brother revealed my uncle-in-law had targeted my sister-in-law. I had to relive my nightmare by speaking up, telling my story to the entire family to let them know the truth. The cost was immense. My family turned against me. My aunt, once loving, called me a liar. My parents, who are still financially dependent on my uncle, didn't defend me. "Get lost," my father said, even questioning my sexual identity, demanding a blood test to "prove" I wasn't a lesbian. This unbearable reaction compounded my trauma, PTSD, and gender confusion. The year I turned 18 was shattered, but I had protected my sister-in-law. I learned that standing up for others is never easy, but always worth it. I faced the painful past and wanted to get back to school one more time with all my strengths. Hopeless and traumatized with my own family, I had no choice but to pour myself into and found solace in non-profit work, self-study, and side jobs. This pathway led me to meet the retired nurse, Ms. Diana Donovan, who later became one of my greatest supporters – emotionally, financially, and academically. Years later, all my dedicated efforts among the local NPO community landed me a full 2015 Opportunity Scholarship at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) university in Vietnam. I was given a second chance to earn my first

bachelor's degree in accounting – a field that aligned with my natural aptitude for math and logic. Fortunately, my RMIT scholarship was supportive enough to cover all costs for my one exchange semester at San Francisco State University (SFSU) in 2019. Through the exchange I learned that I could fully accept and love myself for who I am without having to justify my gender orientation to anyone. I was able to enjoy various cultural activities such as visiting art museums, learning in-depth math and other exciting things. As a result, I finished the semester with an absolute 4.0 GPA at SFSU. Subsequently, I went back and graduated from RMIT as a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society where they honored academic excellence students in the top 15% at each institution.

Volunteering across Vietnam and especially the five years spent at the Breast Cancer Network Vietnam, where I helped to raise public awareness about breast cancer and the early detection, I got to meet with impacted patients and their families, listened to their fears, observed their strength and studied the profound impact of compassionate care. I witnessed the moments of lives and deaths of those who I had just met yesterday, the next day, they could be gone forever. The realization of life being actually too short and fragile taught me the importance of being there for people and caring for them in their most vulnerable state. In those moments, something shifted within me. I kept that thought with me and I made the decision to go as far as I could with higher education before I return to serve my local community. With grit and grind, I made it to CCSF in Spring 2022 amidst the pandemic and financial difficulties. Though I have been a Dean's list student, a student leader at CCSF, and had been working tirelessly for over 10 years previously; I still bear the same financial hardships like other students in the States due to the inflation, increased costs of living, health insurance, and tuition fees, as a self-funded international student in San Francisco. Every time adversity pays me a visit, I greet it alone. I keep telling myself to push through, because there will be better days ahead, and because I want to live in a way that deserves all the help, I have received from so many generous people who came into my life.

From time to time, I could feel down, tired, or desperate yet I never want to quit. I have never had that thought, even on terrible occasions such as the nights my uncle came into my room. My life is too precious as it took so much effort for my mom to bring me into this world. Reflecting on the journey I have been on so far, I always think about my first scholarship at RMIT Vietnam. When my mentor explained to me right after I was selected to receive the RMIT scholarship, she told me “When you

receive an opportunity, someone else doesn't. Use your second chance well." I still recalled one of the candidates from the day of all the interviews conducted —a talented disabled student, dressed in a red outfit, kind and confident. I kept wondering how her interview went until much later, when I stood on stage and she wasn't there. At that moment, I realized the opportunity given to me and other candidates, was not given to her. Was it fair? Do I deserve this better than her? Am I worthy enough for this second chance? How was the decision made? The path I walked was not given to everyone and I carry those thoughts with me every day.

Furthermore, "It takes a village to raise a child," so the person I have become today is only possible because of all the supporters I have met along the way since I was born. When I am here by myself studying abroad, I never feel lonely because of all the support I got from my community. My supervisors give me flexibility at work when they know I am in the nursing program. My advisor believed in me when I told them I didn't think I could make it to the program as it was way too competitive and I doubted myself. Until now, I am here in my first semester of the Registered Nursing program - following my calling with the hope of making a real impact on people's lives through the medical path. The constant, tireless and kind pushing from everyone taught me the value of gratitude and appreciation. I didn't grow because of my trauma or my struggles but because of the kindness I have gotten since the day I went back to school.

Therefore, I really appreciate this chance to dwell on this matter to create the one special scholarship that might be the only one in the world, in which I want to make sure that it reflects all the core values that I cherish throughout my personal experiences with lots of scholarships. I wish for once the scholarship to not look at the pain, the grief or the miseries we carried. Being a student is a road less travelled on its own since not everyone chooses to be educated in school first, hence we should not compare the past, the background nor the financial needs to see who is more desperate than whom. If standing in front of food, housing and clothes we are all human, then we should face any opportunity with the same equality: that we are human and we deserve to thrive in the right environment. Thus, we shall get all the help we can get to become the best possible version of ourselves. Instead, we should look closely at the person from the humanity aspect, if they live their life with full appreciation and resilience, that is enough for them to be selected as a scholarship recipient.

If it is up to me to design a scholarship to transform lives and have the same long-lasting impact, I hope the scholarship is called ONE SCHOLARSHIP. Sometimes one moment, one chance, one person, or one scholarship is all it takes to make a difference in someone's life. I sincerely don't think about making a difference in the world as the pain of living everyday life and trying to survive each and every day are more than we understand. If there is one thing that comes along the way to make someone's day, to give them hope, to lift them out of misery and kindly tell them to continue to be brave and keep walking for all the better days are ahead, I want to give those people more time, more education, and more kindness. The most vulnerable people are also the ones who carry the deepest gratitude and appreciation to others. They are the people who need the most help they can get.

Challenges, tears, difficulties, mental health, stress are those things everyone has to face in life in some capacity regardless of their cultures, identities or regions because they are part of life. In front of them, everyone is equal. However, choosing how to live, how to see things with open eyes and different perspectives are appreciated.

We are humble because we are human and we are grateful because we are just small sands in the universe. This ONE scholarship, therefore, will aim to provide the utmost support instead of creating more challenges not only for those who are in need to continue or finish their education, but also for those who can at the same time show how they appreciate life and think about others. More specifically, the candidate must emphasize people who make impacts on their life by nominating two people and explain why and how. If they are selected, they are required to split the scholarship with those two nominees.



Figure 1 Design by Canva



APPLICATION GUIDE

1

ELIGIBILITY

- Demonstrated financial need
- Strong gratitude and appreciation
- Personal story of resilience
- Nominate two individuals who shaped your journey
- Commitment to share the scholarship

2

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Resilience and personal journey
- Commitment to education and future goals
- Gratitude and recognition of others
- Character, kindness, and contribution
- Consideration of personal and financial circumstances

3

SUPPORT LETTERS

- Community Reference
- Academic Reference
- Nominee Reference

All letters should reflect resilience, gratitude, and community.

4

SCHOLARSHIP BENEFITS

- Full tuition (AS, BA, MS, or PhD)
- \$3,000 monthly living & housing support
- Annual home travel allowance
- One-time support (laptop, insurance, or transport – up to \$3,000)
- Fully funded semester abroad
- Coverage for textbooks, training, and academic expenses

5

SUBMISSION

- Combine all documents into one PDF
- Upload to Google Drive / OneDrive
- Submit form with document links
- Deadline: May 25, 2026 | 11:59 PM (GMT+7)
- Contact: scholarships@com.vn

Figure 2 Design by Canva

Scholarship value

- *Full tuition fees at any education level of choice until completion of degree (AS, BA, MS or PhD)*
- *Monthly living stipend and accommodation support allowance of \$3,000*
- *Reimbursement of tickets for home travel allowance once a year*
- *A one-off purchase of means to aid with current situation: choose between a laptop/health insurance/means of transportation (value no more than \$3,000)*
- *Fully covered one semester exchange program abroad (VISA, insurance, tickets, room & boards tuition, living stipend)*
- *Cost for textbook, training, conference and licenses fees (if applicable)*

Eligibility

Successful applicants must:

- *Demonstrate financial need to continue or complete their education*
- *Must show a strong sense of gratitude and appreciation*
- *Must share a personal story that reflects their journey and resilience*
- *Must nominate two individuals who have made a meaningful difference in their life*
- *If selected, must be willing to share the scholarship with the two nominees*

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on each applicant's lived experience and opportunity. Personal, financial, family, and life circumstances will be taken into consideration.

Resilience and Personal Journey

- *Evidence of challenges faced and how the applicant continued moving forward*
- *Honesty and depth in sharing their personal story*
- *Strength shown through difficult life experiences*

Commitment to Education and Future Goals

- *Clear intention to continue or complete their education*
- *Understanding of how education will help them improve their life or support their community*

- *Effort and persistence in their academic or learning journey*

Gratitude and Community Awareness

- *Evidence of gratitude and appreciation toward others*
- *Meaningful recognition of the two nominated individuals and their impact*
- *Willingness to give back and support others when possible*

Character and Contribution

- *Involvement in school, work, or community activities (formal or informal)*
- *Actions that show kindness, responsibility, and care for others*
- *Initiative in supporting themselves or those around them*

Personal Statement Requirement

Applicants must submit a personal statement (500 -1000 words) explaining why they should be selected for this Scholarship. The statement should reflect the scholarship's values of resilience, gratitude, and community.

Please use the following to guide your writing:

- *Your educational goals and what you are currently pursuing or planning to study*
- *How your education will help you create change in your life or your community*
- *Your personal journey, including challenges you have faced and how you kept going*
- *How you practice gratitude and appreciation in your life*
- *The impact of the two people you nominated and why they matter to your journey*
- *Your involvement in school, work, community, or any activities that show your character and commitment*

Support Letters

Applicants must submit three reference letters that support their eligibility for the Scholarship. Each letter should reflect the applicant's journey, resilience, and sense of gratitude.

- *One letter from a community organization (volunteering, work, or long-term involvement of at least 1 year). This letter should highlight the applicant's commitment, character, and how they show up for others.*

- *One letter from a teacher or school representative (teacher, advisor, or school staff). This letter should speak to the applicant's academic effort, growth, and determination to continue their education.*
- *One letter from one of the two nominated individuals. This letter should share the relationship between the applicant and the nominee, and reflect how the applicant carries gratitude, appreciation, and gives back in their own way.*

All references should clearly explain why the applicant deserves this opportunity, and how they reflect the spirit of resilience, gratitude, and community.

Submit your application

- *Combine your supporting documents into one file in .pdf format and upload them to an online storage platform (e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive etc.) and share to ONEscholarships@gmail.com*
- *Complete and submit the y scholarship application form, including links to the required documents by May 25th, 2026, 11:59 PM GMT +7.*

Contact:

- *If you have questions about your scholarship application, or the outcome, please contact the Scholarship Office via ONEscholarships@gmail.com*