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## **ASHBURN TEEN AWARDED \$25,000 FOR DEVELOPING NEW THERAPEUTIC FOR HEART DISEASE**

**Marissa Sumathipala to be Named a 2018 Davidson Fellow**

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Ashburn, Va. – The Davidson Institute for Talent Development has announced the 2018 Davidson Fellows. Among the honorees is 18-year-old Marissa Sumathipala of Ashburn. Sumathipala won a \$25,000 Davidson Fellows Scholarship for her project, *Reinventing Cardiovascular Disease Therapy: A Novel Duel Therapeutic with FOXO Transcription and AMP Kinase*. She is one of only 20 students across the country to receive this honor.

“I am profoundly grateful to be named a Davidson Fellow, an honor that lends further validation to my heart disease research,” said Sumathipala. “In addition to paying for college, the Davidson award fuels me with vigor to continue bringing forth lasting and meaningful benefits to the world through my research.”

Heart disease is a silent killer. With one in three people worldwide dying from it, it is the leading cause of death globally, claiming more lives than all forms of cancers combined. Currently there is no complete cure for heart disease. Sumathipala’s novel dual therapeutic targets two powerful regulatory proteins that share underlying molecular causes of heart disease. Sumathipala’s research enables a paradigm shift towards targeting chronic diseases, like cancer or Alzheimer’s, not as single diseases but clusters of connected diseases. This new paradigm will usher a new era of next-generation therapies that target multiple shared disease pathways.

Marissa is a graduate of Broad Run High School and will attend Harvard University in the fall. She won the First Grand Award at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair and is a record breaking four-time top 15 International Finalist at BioGENEius Competition. In addition to research, Marissa is a nationally ranked ice dancer, the lead soloist in a Theater on Ice team, and enjoys volunteering as a Special Olympics skating coach.

“We are thrilled to recognize the 2018 Davidson Fellows not only for their incredible projects, but also for the journey they forged to reach this point,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “Every year I am amazed by the depth of the Fellows’ accomplishments. Through encouragement and recognition, the Davidson Institute for Talent Development anticipates that gifted students like these will be among the pioneers who will solve the world’s most vexing problems.”

The 2018 Davidson Fellows will be honored at a reception in Washington, D.C., on Friday, September 28.

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 college scholarships to students 18 or younger, who have completed significant projects that have the potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$7.1 million in scholarship funds to more than 300 students since its inception in 2001, and has been named one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships by [U.S. News & World Report](#). It is a program of the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Reno, Nev. that supports profoundly gifted youth.

### **About the Davidson Institute**

Founded by Bob Davidson in 1999, the Davidson Institute for Talent Development recognizes, nurtures and supports profoundly intelligent young people, and provides opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive difference. The Institute offers support through a number of programs and services, including the Davidson Fellows Scholarship and the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](#). For more information about the 2018 Davidson Fellows, please visit [www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship).

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*High-resolution photos are available at [www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship).*