

For Immediate Release
August 16, 2018



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RENO TEEN AWARDED \$10,000 FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT **Oliver Leitner to be Named a 2018 Davidson Fellow**

Reno, Nev. – The Davidson Institute for Talent Development has announced the 2018 Davidson Fellows. Among the honorees is 18-year-old Oliver Leitner of Reno. Leitner won a \$10,000 Davidson Fellows Scholarship for his project, *Localizing Heat with Carbon Foam for Efficient Solar Distillation*. He is one of only 20 students across the country to receive this honor.

“I am beyond thrilled to be named a Davidson Fellow, as it not only validates countless years of hard work, but also encourages me to pursue my passion in renewable energy,” said Leitner. “I am excited to meet all of the other Fellows in the fall and learn more about their brilliant projects.”

For people living in remote, dry climates, in urban areas with contaminated water supply, or under dire conditions such as refugee camps where fresh water is lacking, simple and cost-effective portable water purification devices can be life-saving. In Leitner’s project, he investigated whether carbon foam pads, which have a high absorption spectrum, would be a viable material to add to a simple solar still to increase its efficiency. Leitner designed a small and inexpensive solar still using the carbon foam that produced a third of a liter of fresh water over the course of one winter day, twice the amount he got from a control without the carbon foam. These results are highly encouraging and suggest that these pads alone could help increase the amount of freshwater available to those in remote areas.

Leitner’s interest in renewable energy first developed while growing up in Reno which is ideal for solar energy. This interest was further nurtured after spending two summers living in the District of Vauban in Freiburg, Germany, a neighborhood renowned for its energy-efficiency. It was there where he became hooked on the idea that renewable energy could be integrated into people’s daily lives. Aside from renewable energy, Leitner practices the violin, as he believes music and science have a deep connection.

Leitner graduated from the Davidson Academy will attend Yale University in the fall.

“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 \$7.5 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](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship). For more information about the 2018 Davidson Fellows, please visit www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship.

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High-resolution photos are available at www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship.