



For Immediate Release
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**BAY AREA TEENS AWARDED \$125,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR
ACHIEVEMENTS IN ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE RESEARCH**
Ruoqi Li and Jason Yang Awarded \$100,000 Laureate Scholarship
Raffaello Banin Awarded \$25,000 Scholarship

SAN FRANCISCO — Three Bay Area teens have been named 2026 Davidson Fellows, one of the nation's most prestigious honors for students 18 and younger. Ruoqi Li and Jason Yang of San Jose and Raffaello Banin of Piedmont will share \$125,000 in scholarships.

Ruoqi Li, 16, and Jason Yang, 17, of San Jose — \$100,000 Laureate Scholarship, Engineering
Working as a team, Li and Yang developed SafeStrides, a system that uses camera tracking and wearable sensors to analyze older adults' walking patterns and identify fall risk. By detecting subtle declines in balance before a fall occurs, their project could support earlier intervention, help prevent falls and allow older adults to maintain their independence.

"To me, being recognized as a Davidson Fellow not only represents personal achievement but also inspires me to turn technical research into practical tools that help others, proving that young innovators can tackle society's most urgent challenges," Li said. "I am honored and excited to join the community of Davidson Fellows."

"I'm incredibly honored to be a Davidson Fellow," Yang said. "This recognition affirms our commitment to developing practical, human centered technologies and raising awareness of early fall risk detection in older adults. By making fall risk assessment more accessible and proactive, we hope to encourage earlier intervention and help more seniors maintain their safety, health and independence."

Raffaello Banin, 17, of Piedmont — \$25,000 Scholarship, Science

For his project, Banin found that protein folding followed a repeatable progression of intermediate states. His research has the potential to improve scientific understanding of protein misfolding diseases, such as Alzheimer's, and help guide the design of proteins with new biological functions.

"To me, being named a Davidson Fellow is a tremendous honor," Banin said. "Just as my curiosity has led me to connect seemingly different worlds, from archaeology and music to proteins, I am excited to learn from other young people whose curiosity has taken them in different directions. More than recognition of what I have accomplished, I see this as an opportunity to form new connections, explore new questions and discover where my curiosity might take me next."

“The Davidson Fellows continue to demonstrate what young people can accomplish when curiosity, determination and innovation come together,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “The 2026 Fellows have pursued challenging questions and developed meaningful work with the potential to make a lasting difference in their fields and communities. We are proud to recognize their extraordinary achievements.”

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers 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 \$11.4 million in scholarship funds to 490 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, 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 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 2026 Davidson Fellows, please visit: [DavidsonFellows.org](#).

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High-resolution photos are available at
[DavidsonFellows.org](#)