



The Queer Foundation Scholar

Joe Dial, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Ravensdale WA
jdial@queerfoundation.org

Ray Verzasconi, Ph.D.
Editor
Portland OR
rverzasconi@msn.com

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2018-19 Queer Foundation Scholars



Alexander Gallagher
Baltimore, Maryland



Oz Johnson-Congleton
Portland, Oregon



Mincheol Park
San Diego, California

Read about this year's three scholarship recipients on pp. 2-3. Read their award-winning essays, selected by jurors from among 100 entries at www.queerfoundation.org.

Alexander Gallagher is a graduate of the George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology in Towson, Baltimore County, Maryland.

Alexander dreams of becoming a well-known playwright, and his potential is certainly evident in his award-winning piece. As a member of the International Thespian Society, he is also interested in acting. Indeed, the school's theatre director stated categorically that, having worked with Alexander since he was in the seventh grade, he is one of the most gifted young actors he has ever worked with.

Alexander will soon be off to Bennington College in Vermont where, in addition to focusing on the theatre arts, he hopes to pursue studies in human sexuality from a biological and psychological approach, as well as queer theory. Should his dream of becoming a well-known playwright (meaning one who can earn a living from his craft) not materialize, Alexander's backup plan is to become a sex therapist and counselor. Regardless of whatever career he eventually pursues, he does intend to keep writing and to be an activist for equality for queers.

At the Carver Center, Alexander was active in the Spanish Honor Society, the English Honors Society, and UNITED, the school's LGBT club. Elected president of UNITED his junior year, he helped organize several on-campus discussions, conduct a clothing drive for a local non-profit, and direct a theatre production written and performed entirely by students. He also directed a play for the school's student-run ensemble theatre company.

Alexander writes that he has been out to his peers, teachers, and family members for some time and that he considers himself fortunate in that most of them have been supportive. The few who haven't, he writes, haven't subjected him to any form of bullying.

Oz Johnson-Congleton is the first QF Scholar from Oregon. She graduated from Cleveland High School in Portland.

Oz considers herself a performance artist, and she had a successful one-woman show at Portland's Clinton Theatre this year, using a script she wrote, inspired by Eric Weiner's *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Places in the World*. As a performer, Oz hopes "to blend theatre and social activism to make change through the arts."

Pursuing her interest in the theatre, including directing and designing, at Vassar College, Oz also intends to engage in the study of psychology, sociology, graphic design, and history, although she admits this may change as she discovers new subject areas.

Oz was been particularly active in theatre both on- and off-campus, acting in 4-5 productions a year, directing an on-campus play both her junior and senior years, as well as being involved with design and technology issues of plays.

She was also the captain of Cleveland High School's speech and debate team, competing at the state level tournament. This past year she was the state champion for events poetry interpretation and prose interpretation.

When not busily involved in theatre, speech, debate, and fulfilling requirements for the I.B., Oz also volunteered to tutor younger high school students in speech and debate, and students at her former elementary school in Mandarin Chinese. She was also a participant in the ACLU Summer Advocacy Institute in 2017.

Coming out for Oz was also a positive experience. Although her family initially reacted hesistantly, they soon became very supportive and accepting. Her friends, she writes, were nonplussed since many of them were already members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Mincheol Park graduated from Torrey Pines High School in San Diego, California.

Mincheol's interest is in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, focusing on the socio-cultural and behavioral components of disease, an interest he will pursue at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California. He says he will need clinical experience before deciding on a specific field of medicine, he is presently interested in anesthesiology because of the wide range of knowledge required and for the hands-on procedures that happen every day.

Admitting that he has been a workaholic, much of Mincheol's extracurricular life involved volunteer work. He was a Pacemaker Intern at Palomar Health, the only program in southern California that provides high school and college students interested in medicine with hands-on experience in many health disciplines.

He also participated in his school's Peer Tutoring program. As president his senior year, he not only tutored biology and calculus after school, but he also scheduled tutorials, interviewed potential tutors, promoted the services of the program, and communicated with teachers and parents via email.

This past year he was co-president of the school's Spoken Word club. Earlier this year well-known spoken-word poet Viet Mai invited the club to the annual conference of the California Association of Teachers of English, and Mincheol was one of the students who recited one of his own poems.

And yes, to help pay for college, Mincheol has been working at a local Jamba Juice.

Mincheol is out to his close friends, teachers, and his mother, all of whom have been very supportive. He does write that Torrey Pines High School "is teeming with micro aggression not only against LGBTQ+ students, but other minorities as well."

QF Peer Mentoring

QF started out using individuals as mentors who had an established expertise or interest in the student's major field or fields of interest. The approach had mixed results. The biggest problem was finding individuals engaged in full-time jobs or careers willing to be mentors, or if they were interested, devoting enough time to follow up on mentor responsibilities. QF Scholars and those students who agreed to be listed on the QF website for Special Mention often asked for a mentor, but we couldn't always provide one.

This year we have shifted our focus. Although we still welcome established professionals to volunteer to be mentors, we are now also asking college/university students who are at least juniors to serve as mentors.

Who I've paired this year:

• **Alexander Gallagher** with **Elijah Punzal**, twice a recipient of a QF Publication Award. They are both theatre majors, but with a different focus; one will be at a small liberal arts college in rural Vermont, the other is a junior at a large state university in urban California; one whose Irish heritage is unmistakable; the other, born in the Philippines and raised in a Philippino community in California is a campus activist for LGBTQ+ people of color. An unrealistic pairing? Until I think of James Ivory and Ismail Merchant.

• **Oz Johnson-Congleton** with **Daniela Gati**, a doctoral candidate in English at Brandeis University. Daniela, originally from Hungary, who also attended school in Denmark, has had experience in the theatre arts. Vassar and Brandeis, of course, are but 200 miles apart, but that will still require that they communicate primarily by telephone or email.

• **Mincheol Park** with **Anthony Gómez**. A QF Scholar and a recipient of a QF Publication Award, Anthony started out wanting to earn both a Ph.D. and an M.D. After earning his B.A. in clinical psychology at Pomona College and working in social services in L.A., Anthony will be entering UCLA this fall on a full-ride scholarship, pursuing a master's in social work. They will be cross-town rivals (USC, UCLA) who've pledged to learn about each other's cultural heritage, including attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals. USC, of course, is located in the middle of what is now the largest Korean American community in the U.S. For their part, Anthony and his partner have been exploring the Latino haunts of L.A.

Ray Verzasconi, Ph.D.
Editor

“I Hope You Know”

By **Ray Verzasconi**, editor

The first QF scholarships to high school seniors were awarded in 2006-07. In 2011-12, motivated by a generous donation by Paul Koenisberg of New York City, we established the Publication Awards with the hope of motivating college students to continue contributing to the library of queer literature. Since 2012 we have bestowed some 15 Publication Awards with scholarship stipends of \$250, \$500, or \$1,000, and several without stipend.

With this issue of *The Queer Foundation Scholar* (founded in August 2008), we present our first commissioned piece. From time to time, and when funds permit, we will invite a former QF Scholar, one who has graduated from college, to author a piece for us.

And so we have “I Hope You Know,” with music and lyrics by **Brandon Lambert** (2010-11), which you will find on page 5.

Brandon, originally from Aurora, Ohio, graduated from Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA, and currently resides in New York City. As an actor, however, he is frequently on the road. He has been the piano player and co-star of the madcap vaudevillian comedy *Murder for Two* in Philadelphia, Albany NY, and for six weeks last summer in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. It is a role he is currently reprising at the New London Barn Theatre in New Hampshire.

Brandon has also performed in Little Theatre Productions in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Earlier this summer he co-starred with **Sara Sawyer** in a production of *Life Could Be a Dream* at the Mountain Playhouse in Pennsylvania. He will return to the Mountain Playhouse later this month for performances in *One Slight Hitch*, a farce, and the musical *Smoke on the Mountain*.



Sara Sawyer and Brandon Lambert. Mountain Playhouse, Jennerstown, PA. June 2018.

Since I’ve interviewed the QF High School Senior finalists since 2007, “I Hope You Know” reflects a theme I’ve heard repeatedly from many of our young scholars regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Time and time again, the woman who carried us in her womb for nine months is the first to provide support and acceptance, even if at first it may be very difficult for her. Yes, this is a stereotype, but all stereotypes, if understood in individual contexts, do contain a grain of truth at the very least.

[Continued on page 6.]

"I Hope You Know"
Dedicated to the Queer Foundation
Music & Lyrics by Brandon Lambert
Performed by Sara Sawyer

Link to the Recording
<https://soundcloud.com/bmlambert/i-hope-you-know>

Dramatic Context

A mother finds a love letter written by her teenaged son to his boyfriend. She didn't know he's gay- the son hasn't come out to her yet- but she hopes when he's ready, he'll let her in. I imagine this song taking place that evening, the mother peering into the son's bedroom watching him sleep and softly singing this song, like a lullaby.

Lyric

I hope you know
You can tell me anything
And I'll love you no matter what you say

I hope you know
When you're ready, so am I
This is new to me
But I will try my best to understand

And I'm scared I won't say
What I'm supposed to say
But I will stand with you
And I always will
No matter what you do
'Cause you're my son

So I hope you know
You can be in love with anyone
And as long as he is good to you
I'll be happy
I hope you know

You- you're everything to me
And you will always be
No matter who you love

So I hope you know
You can be in love with anyone
And as long as he is good to you
I'll love him, too
I hope you know

“I was afraid to tell my mother, since her culture really doesn’t accept gays, but when I did she told me nothing would ever change between us. She would always love me.” This young scholar has still not told his father.

“My mother said it was just a phase, but she finally accepted me for who I am, and now the rest of the family has as well.”

“My mother didn’t talk to me for ages, even though she had a gay best friend. But when I really needed someone, she was there immediately, and she has become a staunch supporter of LGBTQ youth.”

“I came out at breakfast, and it stunned my parents. But mom was the first to offer her support, and to make a real effort to understand that being trans isn’t something I chose. She would eventually bring dad along, and he’s now my champion.”

I’m only paraphrasing in those statements what QF Scholars have told me since 2007. Of course, since QF focuses on students who are “out and proud,” I rarely hear about mothers who are unrelenting in their disapproval of an LGBTQ+ child. For these youth, “I hope you know” may only be a fond wish.

On behalf of the Queer Foundation, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Sara Sawyer for her performance of “I Hope You Know” as a favor to Brandon Lambert (in exchange for taking her to a theatre reception in Jannersville, PA, I understand). Ms. Sawyer is a voice teacher and performer based in Minneapolis, MN. Again, we do appreciate having “I Hope You Know” performed by someone with such a beautiful voice. Do visit her website: <https://www.sarasawyer.com/>

Nota bene: Brandon Lambert and the Queer Founddation hold all rights to “I Hope You Know,” both the music & lyrics and the recording. For reproduction, distribution, or other use, please contact Ray Verzasconi at rverzasconi@msn.com. LGBTQ+ student clubs or groups who wish to use the music and lyrics in a play or other production they have written should contact me for permission to use them at no or minimal cost.



Shon Faye

Yesterday at 23:04 · 🧑

The word "man" was gender neutral and referred to both sexes until the 13th century

The female specific pronoun "she" was invented in the 12th century.

The word "girl" was gender neutral and referred to children of both sexes until the 15th century

High heels were invented for men and were worn predominantly by men until 16th century

From the mid 16th century to the 19th century boys would typically wear dresses until the age of 7.

Until the early 1930s pink was considered the appropriate colour for baby boys and blue the colour for baby girls.

In 2017, a Christian couple pull their 6yo son out of a primary school because his classmate wears a dress and asks to be called "she" - citing their 'traditional beliefs' LMAO

Alumni News

Chris Klein (QF Scholar: 2014-15).

Chris returned from his semester in New Zealand in December 2017, and the two photos here were taken after the semester had ended. During Hamilton College's two-week spring break, Chris headed to Nepal with hopes of getting to Everest Base Camp. Unfortunately, the party was forced to turn back a day early when Chris and six other members of their party ended up with altitude sickness, and back in Kathmandu, Chris and two others ended up with food poisoning after eating washed grapes.

Back at Hamilton, Chris started the college's first triathlon team which, he writes, did well for its first year, and the team received a bid to Nationals which, unfortunately, they had to turn down since the Nationals took place during Hamilton's final week.

Although he graduated from Hamilton with a degree in Earth Sciences, Chris had already changed his career goals while still in New Zealand. He now wants to earn a J.D. in some area of public service law. To that end, he accepted a two-month, summer internship with a public service law firm in Washington D.C.

He plans to take his LSAT this September. In the meantime, to save money for law school, he has accepted a position teaching 6th-grade math and science at the Cardigan Mountain School. Cardigan is a private, boys boarding school for grades 6-9 in New Hampshire. Chris is anxious to embark on this new chapter in his life as he says he will have broad leeway in the development of his

curriculum.

The photograph on Cardigan Mountain School's webpage suggests the school has a beautiful campus in rural New Hampshire. One can imagine the contrasting colors of fall blanketed in white in winter. But what does a young man do for fun? Luckily, Darmouth College is but a 30-minute drive!



Zachary Harrington (QE Scholar:2007-08).

Zachary is from Mulкитеo, Washington, a city of some 21,000 inhabitants on Puget Sound north of Seattle. He graduated from St. John's College, and after a sojourn in China, settled in Oakland, California. The San Francisco Bay Area would prove to be a challenge to someone who'd grown up in a relatively conservative town and who attended St. John's, a college that uses the Great Books as the basis of its curriculum and whose

professors generally have a conservative viewpoint. (including several who had been in Nixon's White House), whereas the Bay Area is the liberal center of a liberal state. Still, Zachary found employment teaching in a public school in Oakland, and a UC, Berkeley, graduate as a boyfriend who helped him navigate what was really a new cultural experience.

The past year, however, proved stressful. Zachary's father was diagnosed with a rare and incurable disease, and Zachary would take time off to help his brother care for their father in his final months. Subsequently, a dispute with his school administration, interested solely in having students score well on required standardized tests, led Zachary to resign. Philosophy and poetry were of no practical use to his minority students.

This past summer, Zachary spent a couple of months in Morocco, and he then planned to visit friends in Europe before returning to the Bay Area.

Anthony Gómez (QF Scholar: 2012-13).

Originally from San Diego, Anthony graduated from Pomona College with a degree in clinical psychology. Six years ago his goal was to earn a Ph.D. in psychology and an M.D. in clinical psychiatry, and to become a therapist and counselor for LGBTQ+ youth.

After graduating from Pomona, he went to work as Outreach Coordinator for the California Early Care and Workforce Registry at the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles. The Registry allows child care providers to track the professional and educational development of potential employees, among other things. The experience changed his career goals.

This fall Anthony will enroll in a Master's in Social Work at UCLA. Of no surprise, he is the recipient of a Graduate Opportunity Fellowship which not only waives tuition and fees, but provides a living stipend.

Anthony writes that for more than 2 ½ years he has also been in a heartfelt and supportive relationship with Marco Suárez, whose heritage is both Spanish and Philippino, while Anthony's is Puerto Rican (father) and Mexican (mother). They've been exploring L.A. together, and as indicated elsewhere in this issue, they will both try to mentor Mincheol Park.

The photo below is of Anthony and his 11- 8

year-old niece, Ariana, enjoying a few days in Baja California.



Javon Smith (QF Scholar, 2011-12).

A graduate of DePaul University with a degree in English/Education, Javon is now a teacher of English and Theatre Arts at Thorton High School in Holland, Illinois. Javon continues to serve as a mentor, this year to a genderqueer from Florida whose parents are from Jamaica.

Editor's note.

Every year, QF offers semi-finalists in the high school contest the opportunity to be listed as Special Mention on the QF website and have their essay published there. Most do not respond to the initial invitation from Dr. Dial. This year only two of twelve did. I'll follow up on Dr. Dial's email to the other ten and see if I can get them to respond positively. I hope to report on more than two of the twelve in our fall issue.

Ray Verzasconi

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Queer Foundation celebrates 14 years helping young queer writers.

Since 2004, over 700 high school seniors representing all regions of the United States and some areas abroad have submitted thoughtful and courageous essays in The QF's annual essay contest. Many of these students have given us permission to post their essays online at <http://queerfoundation.org/html/specialmention.html> and at <http://queerfoundation.org/html/former.html>. Teachers and counselors are invited to use these in their schools' educational and guidance programs. We do ask that they send us a short informal note saying how they were used.

Readers of this newsletter have, in addition, had the pleasure of seeing additional writing from many of these young authors, for everyone who participated in the essay contest as a high school senior is eligible to submit further pieces written during their college or graduate school careers for possible publication in *The Queer Foundation Scholar*. Examples of these students' writing may be found in the pages of this newsletter online at <http://queerfoundation.org/html/thequeerscholararchive.html>.

Donations to Queer Foundation support the Queer Foundation Effective Writing and Scholarships Program. Please make your gift today.

Joseph Dial, QF Executive Director
P.O. Box 1206
Ravensdale, WA 98051

jdial@queerfoundation.org
(206) 999-8740

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From the editor's desk . . .

Appetizers & Dessert

Here are a few morsels in case you need a breather from the news out of Washington D.C., and the smoke from wildfires if you live in the West.

- *In a Heartbeat* (2017), a short animated film by Ruth David and Esteban Bravo, should lift your spirits and make you smile.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2REkk9SCRnO/>

With almost 38 million views in less than a year, I imagine it's been seen by the children of a few homophobic Christianists. I suspect that was the hope of Ruth David and Esteban Bravo.

- If you're a fan of Gilbert & Sullivan as I am, this satire of the President, titled "A Very Stable Genius" ("I am the very model of a modern major general..."), might be more to your liking—even if you don't like Randy Rainbow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-LTRwZb35A>

- "How can someone who paid \$290,000 to have sex twice be considered a master of the deal?" Source of question unknown.

- Dan Reynolds, lead singer of Imagine Dragons, is turning out to be one of our staunchest allies. He founded Loveloud Foundation in 2017 in order to "Ignite the vital conversation about what it means to unconditionally love, understand, accept and support our LGBTQ+ friends and family." Last month, through a benefit concert, Loveloud Foundation raised over \$1 million in Salt Lake City, all to benefit various LGBTQ+ organizations.

- There is now a documentary of the internationally renown gay Ballets Trockadero de MonteCarlo: *Rebels on Pointe* (2018). It recently aired on one of the Stars Channels, but has not yet otherwise been released. The trailer is on YouTube but, for some reason, the link isn't working, but you can search for *Rebels on Pointe*

on YouTube. Whether or not you're a fan of ballet, these gay dancers from all over the world are magnificent, and they will make you laugh.

- *Love, Simon* is this year's gay hit, and its success has obscured another worthwhile queer film: *Saturday Church*. Set in NYC and partly based on a true story, it tells the story of Ulysses (played by Lukas Kain), a 14-year-old black lad from the inner-city on a journey to discover his gender identity. Thrown out of his home, Ulysses finds his way to Saturday Church (a real place) where, with the help of trans women, drag queens, cross-dressing men (categories get left at the door), he undergoes a spiritual and creative metamorphosis. Available on YouTube and Google Play.

- Cuba is apparently on the verge of approving same-sex marriage. That's a far cry from the early days of the Revolution when Fidel built a prison specifically for queer men.



AngryAussie
@angryaussie

Personally I say hats off to the gay tourists who were willing to fuck in front of lions.



**Kenyan Official:
Homosexual Lions
Learned It From
"Copying" Gay Tourists**

Source: tumblr