



## THE ASTROS FOUNDATION AND DAIKIN AWARD \$100,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO LOCAL STUDENTS

*Ten seniors to receive \$10,000 each through the second annual Most Valuable STEAM Scholarship Program*

**HOUSTON, Texas—May 19, 2026—** Daikin Comfort Technologies North America, Inc. (Daikin) and the Astros Foundation today announced the 2026 recipients of Daikin’s Most Valuable STEAM Scholarship, recognizing ten Houston-area high school seniors who are taking the next step toward college programs in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Now in its second year, the program awards \$10,000 scholarships, totaling \$100,000, to support students who reflect what “Most Valuable” means: initiative, resilience, and a drive to lead. Created in collaboration with the Astros Foundation, the scholarship highlights the importance of a well-rounded STEAM education in developing the creative and critical-thinking skills needed to solve real-world challenges and shape future innovation.

“At Daikin, we believe the future of innovation depends on investing in people,” said Satoru Akama, CEO of Daikin. “Through the Most Valuable STEAM Scholarship, we are proud to support students who demonstrate not only academic excellence, but curiosity, creativity, and leadership. Strengthening the communities where we live and work, and helping develop the next generation of talent, remains central to our company.”

The 2026 scholarship recipients represent a wide range of interests and future paths, from astronomy and engineering, to medicine, dentistry and beyond, each grounded in a track record of leadership and a commitment to making an impact in Greater Houston. Recipients were selected through a competitive application process that considered students’ achievements throughout their high school careers and commitment to STEAM learning, as well as their experiences and contributions both inside and outside the classroom.

### **2026 Most Valuable STEAM Scholarship recipients include:**

- **Isabella Adame** – Sam Rayburn High School: Isabella Adame plans to attend The University of Texas at Austin to study biology on the pre-dental track, pursuing her goal of becoming a pediatric dentist. A dedicated leader, she has held leadership roles in marching band and wind ensemble, served as secretary of the National Honor Society, and helped launch her school’s Knowledge Insight Tutoring Club.
- **Jouri AlHariri** – Wisdom High School: Jouri AlHariri is a first-generation college student planning to study chemistry as she works toward becoming a dentist. She has challenged herself through academic enrichment opportunities including the UIL Calculator Applications contest and participation in Rice University summer programs.
- **Daniel Ayala** – YES Prep North Forest Secondary: Daniel Ayala plans to study biology to prepare for a future career in medicine. Ranked fifth in his class and a first-generation college student, Daniel has demonstrated leadership as a varsity volleyball captain, National Honor Society representative, and district student ambassador.
- **Liya Degefu** – Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston: Liya Degefu plans to study physics, with a long-term interest in astronomy/astrophysics. A student leader and self-starter, she has served as a Student Ambassador, held a Student Council leadership role, and founded her school’s Debate Club.
- **Catherin Giesen** – Kinder High School: Catherine Giesen plans to major in mechanical engineering, with aspirations to work at NASA as a flight director or astronaut. Ranked fourth in her class, she has combined artistic excellence with scientific achievement through NASA research programs, independent engineering research, and leadership in STEM advocacy at her school.
- **Tiffany Jones** – Stafford High School: Tiffany Jones plans to pursue a degree in civil engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington. A first-generation college student ranked in the top 10 of her graduating class, she has excelled in advanced coursework and developed a strong foundation in problem-solving and perseverance.



- **Keya Joshi** – Harmony School of Discovery: Keya Joshi plans to pursue biomedical engineering, with a focus on improving human health through innovation. She has built an impressive early research portfolio through a Rice University internship and projects spanning AI-based healthcare applications and RNA vaccine development, alongside strong school leadership as a National Honor Society vice president.
- **Marissa Mata** – C.E. King High School: Marissa Mata is a first-generation college student who plans to attend the University of Houston to study biotechnology. A committed leader on campus, she has served as a drill team lieutenant and contributed to award-winning teams in robotics, while staying active in student council and other school organizations.
- **Manthan More** – Goose Creek Memorial High School: Manthan More is a first-generation college student planning to pursue aerospace engineering at The University of Texas at Austin. He has demonstrated exceptional leadership as State President of Texas TSA and expanded his aerospace interests through NASA’s High School Aerospace Scholars program.
- **Melody Ziaee** – Clear Lake High School: Melody Ziaee will attend The University of Texas at Austin to study biology, pursuing a future in neurobiology. She brings a strong blend of research and service leadership, including selection for a highly competitive Applied Behavior Analysis internship and extensive leadership within the American Red Cross.

“This program reflects what’s possible when we come together around education and opportunity,” said Emelda Douglas, Senior Vice President, Community Affairs for the Astros, and Executive Director of the Astros Foundation. “With Daikin, we’re recognizing students who are already making a difference and helping them continue that momentum as they take this exciting next step.”

The Most Valuable STEAM Scholarship is part of Daikin’s broader commitment to the Greater Houston area, made possible through its partnership with the Houston Astros. Beyond scholarships, Daikin and the Astros Foundation also support neighborhood resilience through initiatives like Cooling Communities, a program launched to deliver upgraded HVAC systems where they are needed most across Greater Houston. Together, they are strengthening the communities where employees, customers and neighbors live, learn and thrive.

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### **About Daikin**

Daikin Industries, Ltd. (DIL) is a Fortune 1,000 company with more than 100,000 employees worldwide and a leading indoor comfort solutions provider. Daikin Comfort Technologies North America, Inc. (DNA) is a subsidiary of DIL, providing Daikin, Goodman, Amana® and Quietflex brand products. DNA and its affiliates manufacture heating and cooling systems for residential, commercial and industrial use that are sold via independent HVAC contractors. DNA engineering and manufacturing is located at Daikin Texas Technology Park near Houston, TX. For additional information, visit [www.daikincomfort.com](http://www.daikincomfort.com).

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### **About Daikin Park**

On January 1, 2025, the Houston Astros and Daikin Comfort Technologies North America, Inc. (Daikin) entered into a 15-year, exclusive naming-rights partnership that brands the home of the Astros as Daikin Park. The agreement runs through the 2039 season, and includes official naming rights, partnership benefits, and giving back to the Greater Houston community through educational programming and youth sports development in underserved communities.



Overall, Daikin has invested more than \$1 billion in the Houston area, including more than \$500 million in building Daikin Texas Technology Park.. Daikin is always looking for new ways to support their community and to create innovative technologies, with an unwavering commitment to making sustainable and responsible choices. For more information on Daikin Park, visit <https://daikincomfort.com/about-daikin/daikin-park>.

**About Houston Astros:**

The Houston Astros are an American professional baseball team based in Houston, Texas. The Astros compete in Major League Baseball (MLB) as a member club of the American League (AL) West Division. Established as the Houston Colt .45s, the Astros entered the National League as an expansion team in 1962. The current name, Houston Astros, reflecting Houston’s role as the host of the Johnson Space Center and space exploration, was adopted three years later, when they moved into the Astrodome. The Astros moved to their current home ballpark in downtown Houston in 2000. The Astros have had great success on the diamond, having won two World Series (2017 and 2022), five league pennants, and advanced to a record-setting seven-straight American League Championship Series, winning four of those seven American League pennants.

A tenant of the organization is to give back to the greater Houston community, and that is done through the Astros Foundation, the official 501(c)(3) team charity of the Houston Astros. The foundation seeks to harness the passion of baseball fans to support youth baseball and softball programs, the recognition and honor of our nation’s and first responders, childhood cancer and domestic violence awareness and efforts to reduce homelessness. The cornerstone initiatives include the Community Leaders program, the Astros Youth Academy and the Astros Nike RBI (Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities) Program. For more information on the Astros Foundation, please visit [www.astros.com/foundation](http://www.astros.com/foundation).