

William Greenleaf Eliot Division of Child Psychiatry

September 14, 2020

The William Greenleaf Eliot Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Washington University in St. Louis is proud to announce that Simona Sarafinovska has been named the inaugural recipient of The brAvery Foundation® Award. The brAvery Award is designed for “an exceptional medical student or resident who has demonstrated his/her commitment to a career in child and adolescent psychiatry.”

Simona is a medical student who is also receiving a PhD through Washington University’s Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP). She is committed to a career in child and adolescent psychiatry as well as suicide prevention.

Simona, as she was taking stock of the burden of suicide in medical students and physicians, assembled a team of students, residents, and faculty to investigate burnout, depression, and suicidal ideation in medical students during COVID-19. She plans to use this information to guide structural changes to the university’s mental health resources. Support from The brAvery Foundation will allow Simona to expand her work on medical student well-being, attend the 2020 International Society for Developmental Psychobiology (ISDP) conference focused on persistent effects of early-life adversity on poor mental health outcomes including depression, anxiety and suicidality, and present findings on medical student well-being at 68th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP).

When she graduates from the MSTP, Simona will have both her MD and PhD. She will then go on to do residency and fellowship training, which will likely also include time for research. Once done with all of that training, Simona will be a physician-scientist dividing her time between overseeing a research laboratory and treating patients in the clinic. Equipped with an understanding of the disease both from biological and human perspectives, Simona will be well positioned to make truly transformative advances in patient care.

We congratulate Simona on receiving The brAvery Award, and we appreciate The brAvery Foundation for assisting her as she strives to reach her goals.

While receiving this honor, Simona stated, “I would like to thank The brAvery Foundation® Award for your commitment to suicide prevention, and your support in my attempt to elucidate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on medical student well-being, burnout and suicidal ideation. Without the brAvery Award, our study would certainly not have been able to attain a nationwide platform. It is an honor to be the inaugural recipient of the award, and I hope that I will embody the mission of the Foundation during my MD and PhD training, and my future career in a child and adolescent psychiatry. Thank you!”

