



Scholarship Program Newsletter | Winter 2025

We're building more than a newsletter — we're creating a space that promotes personal growth for a happy and meaningful life.

Message from the Shah Foundation and VE International *Learning from Life's Detours*

As the year draws to a close, it's the perfect moment to pause—not only to celebrate our successes but to reflect on what we've learned along the way. Sometimes the moments that feel like failure become the sparks that ignite our resilience, growth, and purpose.

In this issue, we're proud to feature "From Failure to Fuel," a personal essay by our scholar Richie, who turned a setback into motivation to move forward. His story reminds us that real learning begins when we meet challenges with courage and curiosity. This theme captures the heart of our mission: helping young adults develop the life skills that make for not only successful, but meaningful lives—financial literacy, self-awareness, discipline, resilience, and gratitude. And here's something new! Our **Pause and Think** section now invites you to share your reflection:

With warm wishes for a joyful holiday season and a bright, purposeful year ahead,

Deena and Pravin Shah
Deena & Pravin Shah
D & P Shah Family Foundation

John Widlund
John Widlund
President, VE



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Pause & Think

A moment to breathe, reflect, and grow.



This month's question reflects with Richie Magaribi's story, *"Turning Failure into Fuel."* Richie's story reminds us that strength often reveals itself in our hardest moments. As you read his reflection, take a moment to pause and consider your own journey.



Pause and Think

Think of a time something didn't go as planned.
What hidden lesson or plan did you discover because of it?



"Failure is not the opposite of success; but its part of it."
- Ariana Huffington

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Turning Failure into Fuel

Richie Magaribi

As graduation day for the Class of 2021 drew near, I received news that would change the course of my life—I had been selected as a recipient of the Shah Foundation Scholarship. It was a moment of validation, the culmination of years of hard work and perseverance. My connection with the Shah family began in 2019 through my Virtual Enterprise (VE) class, and their belief in me was more than financial support—it was a vote of confidence in my potential.

I left high school feeling unstoppable. My first semester in college went smoothly, and I felt proud of how I had adjusted to my new environment. Riding high on that success, I made a bold decision: I signed up for 17.5 credits in my second semester and joined the college tennis team. I underestimated the time, energy, and discipline both would require.

As the weeks went by, my priorities shifted. Tennis became my focus, and academics took a back seat. My grades suffered, and my GPA dropped to 2.7. Then came the moment I feared most: I lost my Shah Foundation Scholarship. I was devastated. The hardest part wasn't the loss of financial support—it was the shame of having to tell my parents, who had been so proud of me. That weight could have crushed me. Instead, it ignited something inside me.

I resolved to rebuild—not just my grades, but my habits, my discipline, and my mindset. I attended an on-campus time management seminar, where I learned practical strategies: breaking large tasks into smaller steps, using daily planners, sticking to strict timetables, and holding myself accountable—doubling the effort if I missed a goal. These weren't just tips; they became my lifeline.

Slowly, the tide began to turn. My grades improved, and my confidence grew. By the end of freshman year, I was on an upward trajectory. The Shah Foundation took notice. They saw not just a student bouncing back, but a young man who had faced failure head-on and turned it into fuel. They reinstated my scholarship.

In my final year, I became captain of the tennis team, earned the Presidential Honor Award, and landed on the Dean's List. The scholarship had started as a symbol of achievement. By the time I graduated, it had become a symbol of resilience, second chances, and the power of learning from failure.

Today, I carry those lessons with me. The Shah Foundation gave me more than financial assistance—they gave me the tools and belief to transform a setback into a stepping stone. And that, I believe, will serve me far beyond the tennis court or the classroom.