 ***Henrih Alikaj Memorial Scholarship*** 

***2024-2025***

   

**Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Henrih Alikaj**

Henrih Alikaj, a remarkable individual whose life, though brief, left an indelible mark on everyone who knew him, serves as an inspiration for many. As the beloved son of Migena and Altin Alikaj and a cherished brother to Julian, Henrih's life was a beacon of joy, intelligence, and kindness. His story is one of academic excellence, community service, and unwavering positivity, reflecting a life well-lived and a legacy that continues to inspire others.

**A Journey from Albania to America**

The Alikaj family embarked on a journey from Albania to the United States in 1997, seeking better opportunities for their young son, Henrih. At just two years old, Henrih began a life in a new land filled with promise and potential. His parents' aspirations for him were matched by his own determination and dedication to excel in every endeavor. Henrih's academic journey was marked by outstanding achievements, starting with his education at the Utica Academy for International Studies, where he was a valedictorian. His dedication to his studies was evident as he pursued a degree in Neuroscience at the University of Michigan and later continued his education at the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MSUCOM).

**Academic Excellence, Community Service, and Dreams Cut Short**

Henrih Alikaj’s academic prowess was matched by his commitment to community service. Throughout his educational career, Henrih volunteered his time to support those around him. He participated in significant research projects, including a study on *"Lung Dendritic Cells Drive Natural Killer Cytotoxicity in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease,"* which was published in the National Library for Medicine. His contributions to research and his community exemplified his desire to make a difference in the world. Henrih's dream was to become a pediatrician, driven by a passion to provide the best care to his patients. In one of his essays, he expressed his commitment to bringing **"unwavering positivity in a field that can be so dreary."** This sentiment encapsulates Henrih’s approach to life and his career aspirations.

Although his journey was tragically cut short by a heart attack caused by an undiagnosed condition, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, while he was working out, his mission to help others and spread positivity remains a powerful legacy.

**An Enduring Legacy**

Henrih Alikaj was deeply loved and respected by everyone who knew him. His ability to brighten a room with his smile and laughter, his polite manners, and his caring nature left a lasting impression on all. His life motto, **"Be the best you can be and have fun along the way,"** continues to inspire those who had the privilege of knowing him to live their lives with joy, compassion, and dedication.

To honor Henrih's memory and his commitment to helping others, the Alikaj family has established the *Henrih Alikaj Memorial Scholarship.* This scholarship provides two Dakota High School students with a $500 scholarship, aimed at supporting their educational endeavors and ensuring Henrih's name lives on.

Henrih’s life story and motto challenge us to be the best versions of ourselves, reminding us of the impact one person can have on the world. His dedication to his family, his academic achievements, and his desire to serve others showcase a life dedicated to making the world a better place. Henrih Alikaj’s life, though short, was filled with purpose and love. He remains a shining example of how to live with integrity, compassion, and joy. His legacy continues to inspire current and future generations to strive for excellence, serve their communities, and live with kindness. The Alikaj family hopes that Henrih’s story will serve as a testament to the profound difference one person can make, and his memory will undoubtedly continue to encourage others.

To read more about Henrih’s life, click on this link: <https://www.heartsforhenrihalikaj.com/henrihs-story>

**Criteria to get the $500 Henrih Alikaj Memorial Scholarship:**

* The applicants must have a GPA of 3.2 or higher.
* The applicants MUST TYPE an essay (**at least one page, but it can definitely be longer**) responding to **ONE** of these prompts:
1. ***Henrih Alikaj’s accomplishments and contributions have had a lasting impact on others. Describe how Henrih’s life inspires you to make a difference in your community, family, or personal ambitions. What values or qualities from Henrih Alikaj’s story and life motto “Be the best you can be and have fun along the way” do you hope to embody in your own life, and why are they meaningful to you?***
2. ***Henrih Alikaj’s life was short but very well-lived. Henrih was SO LOVED and RESPECTED by everyone who knew him. Henrih’s legacy will definitely live on. What will your name be remembered for? What legacy will you leave behind?***