

2025 Floyd E. McDonald Scholarship Winner



Hello! My name is Elayna Paro, and I am a senior at Indiana University Indianapolis pursuing a degree in Forensic Science with a concentration in Biology, along with a minor in Criminal Justice. I grew up in Portland, Indiana, and developed my passion for science early on. I have always loved being challenged, and the idea of encountering something new every day sparked my interest in forensics.

Throughout my studies, I have been actively involved with the Bepko Learning Center, where I began as a biology mentor and later transitioned into a leadership role overseeing the mentoring program. I also gained valuable research experience working in a Forensic DNA Phenotyping lab, which focuses on understanding human physical appearance for applications in forensic and anthropological fields. My primary interests include biology, as well as ballistics and firearms. My time at the Bepko Learning Center has also deepened my passion for teaching and mentoring.

Outside the classroom, I am a member of the IUI Honors College, which has provided me with unique opportunities, such as exploring personal academic projects and studying healthcare systems in Scandinavia.

Receiving the 2025 Floyd E. McDonald Scholarship has greatly reduced financial stress during my final year of studies. After graduation, I plan to continue my education in Forensic Science at IUI by pursuing my master's degree, and then transition into the workforce.