**Dr Elizabeth Thomas**

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**RE: Scholarship Application**

To the Superstars of STEM program organisers,

I wish to apply for the scholarship to take part in the Superstars of STEM program 2021. As a woman of colour of Asian heritage, I am keen to promote cultural diversity and prevent racism. Representation of women in academia, especially Asian women, is poor. I hope to increase public visibility of minorities such as Asian women in STEM, which this program would help facilitate. I also have a deep interest in science communication and a passion for inspiring women online and through school engagement. My passion for research and enthusiasm for science communication makes me a great addition to the Superstars of STEM 2021 cohort. However, I am currently dealing with financial difficulties and will be unable to pay the $2,600 to participate in the program.

From August 2019 to April 2020, I was employed at 0.6EFT as an acting Women’s Mental Health Team manager. This role involved managing the team, but also involved developing my own research ideas in anticipation for moving into an official post-doctoral position. It was verbally agreed that I would be employed at the same EFT as a post-doctoral in the Women’s Mental Health Team after the managerial role. However, due to COVID-19, I was reduced to 0.4EFT in April 2020 when I officially moved to a post-doctoral role.

If the COVID-19 pandemic had not happened, I would have been employed at 0.6EFT. Despite disruptions due to COVID-19, I have 5 papers currently under review, a book chapter (academic press) and have 3 more manuscripts in preparation, all while also continuing to supervise 3 Honours students and being a member of the Alfred Research Alliance EMCR committee. While I have continued to maintain my output and continue to develop my track record, this reduced fraction added financial strain, particularly since I have a toddler and a mortage. In addition, my contract ends in October 2020, and I am currently unsure whether my fraction will remain at 0.4EFT, be reduced further or whether my contract will not be renewed.

Based on my current financial situation, I am requesting a scholarship so that I can participate in the program without substantial financial strain. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Yours sincerely,
**Dr Elizabeth Thomas**