Inspired to Excel

Shirshak Gautam GH ‘23

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Shirshak Gautam GH ’23 was a member of the Yale community long before he enrolled as a first-year student. He spent a portion of his childhood in New Haven, where his father did postdoctoral research at Yale, before his family moved to Arkansas. “I have many happy memories here,” he says, “which helped me decide to come back.”

Before his first semester, Shirshak participated in FOCUS, a pre-orientation program in which he volunteered at local nonprofit organizations and learned his way around New Haven. The program was also an opportunity to forge connections with his fellow first-years and the upper-level students who served as peer counselors. “Everyone is so supportive here,” Shirshak says.

Shirshak finds a strong sense of camaraderie in his residential college as well: “My college provides much of the small-community feeling that permeates Yale and makes the experience so enjoyable for me. I find a lot of value in connecting with others and sharing meaningful time together.”

Off campus, Shirshak volunteers with Demos, an undergraduate organization dedicated to teaching science to schoolchildren around New Haven. Once a week, he travels to a local elementary school to spark students’ interest in the basic sciences through engaging demonstrations and interactive experiments. An aspiring biomedical engineering major, Shirshak is “thrilled to see how curious and enthusiastic” his young students are during their lessons.

Shirshak is the recipient of a Nathan Hale Associates scholarship. “Many people have helped me get to Yale: my parents, my family, and generous donors who contributed to my education. Knowing I have this kind of support empowers me to excel and inspires me to be deliberate in every choice I make at Yale.”

Donors make it possible for exceptional students like Shirshak to attend Yale, regardless of their financial circumstances. To learn more about ways to support these students, please visit giving.yale.edu or call 800.395.7646.