

# MitoScholar+

Empowering youth living with mitochondrial disease  
to focus on their futures.



## Ainsley Eerkes

Edmonton, Alberta

**BSc Majoring in Biological Sciences and  
Minor in Art Design (1<sup>st</sup> year)**

University of Alberta – Edmonton, Alberta

Meet Ainsley Eerkes, one of our amazing MitoScholars+. This fall, they're entering the University of Alberta's Faculty of Science, majoring in biological sciences and minoring in art and design.

Ainsley's mother lives with a mitochondrial disease known as chronic progressive external ophthalmoplegia (CPEO), which makes Ainsley one of our MitoScholars+. CPEO is a condition where the muscle functions in the eyes and eyelids are lost and tends to begin in early adulthood.

"Living with her has given me a lot of insight into how these types of disabilities can affect people in their daily lives and the necessity of the medical systems when you live with one of these disabilities, which is one of the reasons I am interested in studying healthcare or a related field," says Ainsley. "I'm hoping with this scholarship to be able to continue pursuing a greater understanding of human bodies and how they work so that I can help people like my mom or people with other disabilities thrive in their lives."

Ainsley shares, "I am honoured to have been chosen, and I'm so grateful for Mitocanada's support this upcoming year. It takes stress off my family, especially my mom."

We're thrilled to be supporting Ainsley in their studies this year!