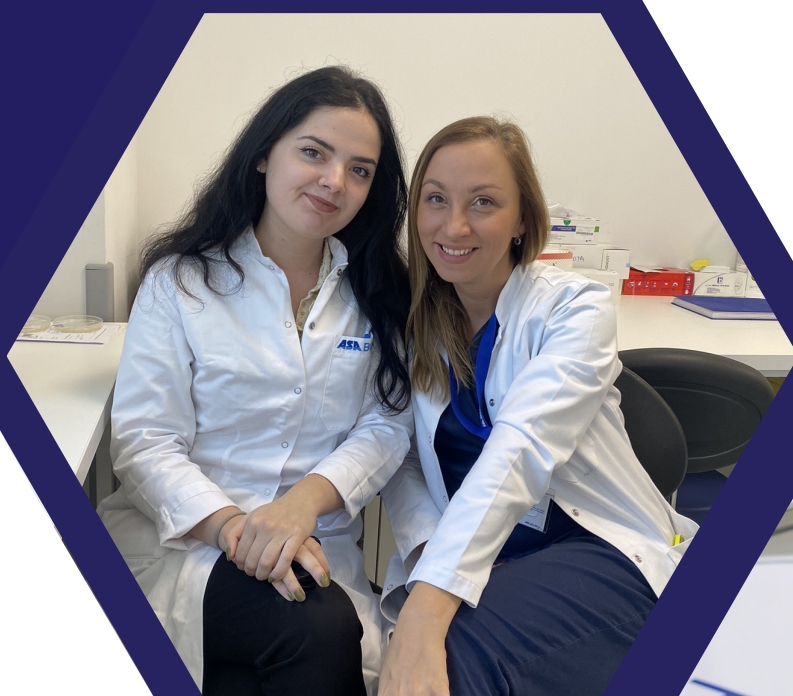


# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

The month of birth and  
new opportunities!



# March: a month of new beginnings and reaching dreams at Hastor Foundation

The month of March at the Hastor Foundation is a time of new beginnings, new opportunities, and reaching new dreams. Throughout the year, letters arrive at our address from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the most remote areas to numerous municipalities and cities. We dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to every request that reaches us. These are various life stories, mostly difficult ones, yet full of success, pride, and much more. All of this motivates the diligent volunteers of the Hastor Foundation to read each application with the utmost attention, empathy, and understanding. This is exactly what we are doing this March as well, when we have reviewed the applications received for the 2025/2026 school year.



Over the past year, we have received nearly 3,000 applications for scholarships. After carefully reviewing them, we have prepared responses to all applicants. The selection process requires from our candidates submit the necessary documentation needed for ranking in the upcoming period, after which further selection procedures and contract signing will take place just before the start of the new school year.

The dedicated team at the Hastor Foundation is facing an exceptionally exciting and dynamic period, during which our offices will be filled with incoming documentation. Just as we have done for the past two decades, we will once again give our absolute best to approach each student with love and a sincere desire to build a better future.

*Good luck to everyone!*

*Translated by: Zerina Kosovac*



# Anja Udovčić – musical gem of Zenica

*A*nja Udovčić, a scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation, is a young and talented violinist from Zenica who captivates audiences and critics across the region with her exceptional musical skill and dedication. From her earliest childhood, Anja has shown a strong inclination toward music, and the violin has become her faithful companion and a means of expressing her emotions.

She completed her elementary music school in Zenica, where, under the expert mentorship of her teachers, she gained knowledge of the fundamentals of music theory and violin. In her hometown she is currently in the final year of secondary music school in the class of Professor B. Košpo.

Her first major achievement came at the 9th String Festival "Stringfest" in Sremska Mitrovica in 2019 where, under the mentorship of Professor A. Bihorac, she performed the compositions "Poljska liga" and "Concertino Op. XIV." Her masterful performances earned her praise and recognition from music critics. This young violinist is the first violin of the spiritual ensemble of the Vrhbosna Archdiocese "Novo Nebo" as well as the Chamber Symphony Orchestra in Zenica. She has also won first place at the Sergei Rachmaninoff Competition in Sarajevo and "Primavera" in Bijeljina. Since 2022, Anja has been a regular participant in the Music Camp for Young Virtuosos, an international initiative aimed at promoting and connecting talented young musicians from our country. At last year's concerts at the National Museum and the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Anja performed Bach's compositions and Kupković's "Cantica Slovaca" with the orchestra.

Anja Udovčić, with her exceptional musical talent and continuous efforts to refine her skills, sets high standards for young artists. Through her education and artistic achievements, which include prestigious competitions and performances at significant cultural events, she has demonstrated technical and interpretative maturity, making her one of the most promising young musicians in the region.

*Prepared by: Lorens Starnjak*  
*Translated by: Ivan Rajić*



# Mentorship under the microscope: Šejla Kotorić Keser, MSc, MD, on the results of the mentorship program and the importance of practical knowledge

At the Department of Clinical Microbiology at ASA Hospital, precision and professional guidance are key to the success of new generations of experts. The department head, **Šejla Kotorić Keser**, MSc, MD, contributes to this every day, and we had the honour of having Dr. Kotorić Keser as a mentor in the Hastor Foundation's mentorship program "First Step into the Business World."

We spoke with the doctor about the results of the mentorship program, but also about important facts in clinical microbiology.

## *Are you satisfied with the results of the mentorship program "First Step into the Business World"?*

Yes, I am delighted with the results of the mentorship program "First Step into the Business World." The program provided students with a unique opportunity to engage in practical work in a real professional environment, which allowed them to gain concrete experience that was not covered by formal education. Through mentorship, students had the opportunity to direct their passion for science in constructive professional direction, developing key skills necessary for their future work in specialized health fields.

## *How would you describe the professional development of the student during the mentorship in the Clinical Microbiology department?*

During the mentorship program, student Elma demonstrated exceptional dedication, intellectual curiosity, and a remarkable ability to quickly acquire new skills. In a short time, she mastered complex microbiological methods and successfully applied her theoretical knowledge in laboratory practice. Her capacity to adapt to working conditions, identify key elements in the analysis of laboratory reports, and communicate effectively with colleagues and

mentors was notable. I believe that her experience in our Clinical Microbiology department was crucial for her professional development, enhancing both her technological and critical thinking skills.

## *What was the mentorship program like what were the main duties and challenges of the mentee?*

The mentorship program was structured through a series of practical activities that covered all key aspects of clinical microbiology. Elma's main duties included sampling human material, preparing samples for testing, performing microbiological tests and analyses, and interpreting laboratory reports. The program also included detailed work with state-of-the-art techniques, understanding the latest microbiological methods and their application in a clinical setting.





### *What are the most important procedures and analyses performed in clinical microbiology?*

In clinical microbiology, various procedures and analyses are performed that are essential for the diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of infections. The most important procedures and analyses regularly applied in everyday microbiological practice are:

- the cultivation of microorganisms, involving the isolation and identification of microorganisms from clinical samples (blood, urine, sputum) using various agars and media
- testing the sensitivity of bacteria to antibiotics, which helps to determine the most effective therapy for the patient
- the detection of pathogens through genetic material, allowing for fast and precise diagnosis, especially for difficult-to-cultivate microorganisms
- the tests for detecting specific antibodies or antigens used for diagnosing infections such as HIV, hepatitis, and bacterial diseases
- the microscopic analysis of samples, facilitating the visualization of microorganisms
- testing for nosocomial (intrahospital) infections and resistant strains, as well as microbiological analyses of the hospital environment

These are some of the analyses. Each of these analyses and procedures plays a key role in the proper diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of infections. Successful implementation of these methods requires a high level of expertise and precision, as microbiological findings will significantly influence the choice of therapy and patient outcomes.

### *How important are microbiological findings for diagnosing and treating patients?*

Microbiological findings are crucial for diagnosing and selecting appropriate therapy, as they allow clinicians to accurately identify disease-causing organisms and determine the most effective treatment. Microbiological findings also enable the timely identification of antibiotic-resistant strains, which allows for timely adjustment of therapy and prevents the further spread of drug resistance.

### *What skills do you consider most important for students who want to work in the field of medical microbiology? Do you have a message for them?*

For students who wish to work in the field of medical microbiology, key skills include:

1. analytical thinking the ability to accurately interpret laboratory data and relate that data to the broader clinical context
2. technical expertise a deep understanding and competent use of modern microbiological techniques and technologies
3. communication skills clear and precise communication with colleagues and other members of the healthcare team, as well as with patients
4. continuous learning given the rapid advancement of technology and new methodologies, it is essential that experts in this field are prepared to constantly improve and apply the latest knowledge.



#### ***A message to students:***

If you want to succeed in the field of clinical microbiology, you must be passionate, dedicated and always motivated to learn. This profession requires a high level of expertise, precision and responsibility, but it also provides an incredible opportunity to contribute to the health and well-being of patients. Develop your skills, be responsible and always strive for excellence in everything you do.

# A handbook that connects: the joint contribution of current and former scholarship

The Hastor Foundation not only monitors the success of its scholarship recipients and provides selfless support, but also encourages cooperation between current and former scholarship recipients. Thanks to one such cooperation, “Handbook for German Language Teachers” was created. The story of the creation of this handbook is very interesting.

**Lamija Horić-Šabić**, an alumna of the Hastor Foundation, was a TA to scholarship recipients **Farah Bajrić** and **Amina Pivić** in the course German Language Methodology 1. The first discovery was that they were connected through the mission and story of the Hastor Foundation, and then the idea of creating a manual came. Addressing all the methodological challenges faced by German language teachers in elementary schools, they did various tasks and exercises to overcome these challenges. One of them was the fact that the teacher must have specially prepared materials for students who attend adapted-curriculum classes and for students who are gifted so that neither group is neglected in German language classes. For students who attend classes according to an adapted curriculum, the contents offered by approved textbooks are often complex, and the students are unable to understand them, while the same contents are often too simple for gifted students, and they solve them very quickly. Because of this, it often happens that these students are neglected in the German language class.

Bearing in mind the fact that the textbooks used in classes do not contain tasks or activities adapted to these two categories of students, but also that there are no other sources from which the teacher would draw these materials, they concluded that teachers are left to their own devices in this case and that, despite all the obligations related to the preparation and organization of classes, they must create these materials themselves.



*Therefore, we decided to create a manual that will contain tasks for students who attend classes according to an adapted curriculum and for gifted students from 6th to 9th grade and thus offer teachers ready-made materials and make it easier for them to prepare classes, explains Lamija.*



The promotion of this manual was held in the City Library in Zenica, and the promoters were Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alica Arnaut, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, and Prof. Dr. Amela Ćurković. The reading room of the City Library was full, and the atmosphere exuded pride and a sense of satisfaction. One of the most beautiful items that we can single out from this project is the fact that all proceeds from the sale were donated to a single mother of five children.

*Lamija was our creative engine and driver of this all. She helped awaken a creativity in me that I didn't even know I possessed, and it's clear that she still applies the values that the Foundation teaches us in her daily life, which are to be selfless, share our knowledge, achievements and success with others, Amina proudly stated.*



It is of great importance to mention that the cooperation of alumni with scholarship recipients of the Hastor Foundation makes a huge contribution to strengthening the mission of the Hastor Foundation itself. Through this cooperation, it is possible to contribute to the wider social community, as this manual proves.

*The message would be that happiness is making another person happy, that true satisfaction lies in good deeds, that pure intention has the most beautiful outcomes and that being useful to society means progress, said our alumnist Lamija at the end.*

**Prepared by: Aida Suljić**  
**Translated by: Maida Avdić**

# Message of the month

Every day the Hastor Foundation receives messages of gratitude, scholarship applications, and words that leave us breathless, inspiring us to never give up on our mission. We often like to say that our best results are our scholarship recipients, both current and former.

In the following lines, read about another outstanding achievement...



*It is difficult to find the right words to fully express my gratitude for the support you have given me over the past 15 years. From the second grade of elementary school to the completion of my master's degree, you have been by my side, not just through the scholarship, but also through the sense of security, belonging, and belief in my abilities. Your support was not only financial; it was so much more than that. Through the Foundation, I learned the importance of helping others, being responsible, persistent, and believing in myself even in the most difficult moments. Every scholarship was a reminder that I was not alone, that someone saw my effort and believed in my potential. I am especially grateful that, as your scholarship recipient, I had the opportunity to volunteer and mentor younger scholarship recipients. Over four years of working with elementary school students, I was able to share my knowledge, provide support, and encourage them to never give up on their dreams. That experience shaped me and taught me how important it is to give to others what we ourselves have received. Thanks to you, education was never a burden for me, it was an opportunity. I had the chance to grow, learn, and develop, knowing that behind me stood a Foundation that always supported and encouraged me. I cannot express how much that meant in moments of self-doubt or when obstacles seemed insurmountable. Today, as I close one chapter of my education, I feel immense gratitude, but also a deep sense of responsibility to continue passing on the values you have instilled in me. If God wills, I hope that in some way, I will be able to give back what I have received, whether through helping others or through work that brings meaningful change to the community.*

*Hastor Foundation, thank you for believing in me. Thank you for standing by me: from a little girl with a backpack bigger than herself, to the person who now proudly stands before her future challenges. Thank you for helping me become who I am today.*

*With deep respect and endless gratitude,*

*Fatima Zahirović, Master of Microbiology, Fojnica*

Translated by: Zerina Kosovac



# Foto gallery

## March at the Hastor Foundation



Zenica



Kalesija



Tuzla



Visoko



Sarajevo



Bugojno



Srebrenik



Fojnica





**We invite you**  
*to join our mission and help  
fulfill the dreams of talented  
students and young people  
who need our support.*

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If you would like to support the work of the Hastor Foundation,  
you can make a donation through one of the following bank accounts:

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