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# ECE<sup>®</sup> Aid Newsletter

*A charitable initiative developed to provide free evaluation reports for vulnerable and displaced populations.*



## ECE<sup>®</sup> Aid Updates

Dear Friends,

What do Nigeria, Greece, basketball, and our ECE hometown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, have in common? This past week the Milwaukee Bucks, our professional NBA basketball team, won the Championship Finals! The city was buzzing all week long with excitement since the only other time the Bucks had won the NBA Finals was in 1971. With only one game left to win, the entire city felt a range of emotions from anxiety to jubilation. The Bucks pulled it off in Milwaukee with a 105-98 win over the Phoenix Suns.

As with all team sports, the entire series depended on every player involved both on and off the court. However, in the final game, Bucks star player Giannis Antetokounmpo showed his incredible athletic abilities in scoring almost half of the Bucks' points.

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Now, we in Milwaukee have been proud to know and love Giannis for years. But for many outside of our city, or those who don't follow basketball, you may not know his humble beginnings and his story of encountering many challenges and facing down much adversity throughout his life.

To begin, Giannis' parents immigrated from Nigeria to Greece in the early 1990s searching for employment opportunities. Though he was born in Greece, Giannis did not have Greek or Nigerian citizenship and was considered stateless for most of his youth. Likewise, stable jobs were difficult to come by for his undocumented immigrant parents. Growing up in Greece, Giannis dodged threats from anti-immigrant attitudes as well as the constant risk of being deported. He helped his family survive by selling watches and sunglasses on the streets of Athens with his brothers.



When he was 13, a Greek basketball coach began scouting him and offered better, more stable jobs for his parents in exchange for training Giannis to become a basketball player. He trained hard and played in the semi-pro Greek basketball league from 2011-2013.

In spite of his many hardships, Giannis finally got his big chance in 2013 when he was drafted to the NBA Milwaukee Bucks at the age of 18. He was eventually able to move his entire family to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and quickly became a rising star. Giannis has won many awards and trophies throughout his young career, but helping win the NBA Finals with the Milwaukee Bucks has sealed his legacy in our city forever.



The story of Giannis Antetokounmpo in many ways is unique, and yet, much of his and his family's immigration journey is similar to countless others trying to find a better life for their families. Not every immigrant coming to the U.S. becomes one of the greatest athletes in the world. However, Giannis' story of perseverance in the face of adversity and his striving to better not only himself, but also his family and community, is one that can resonate with all of us, especially for immigrants and refugees around the world looking for courage and hope.



## ECE® Aid Recipient Story Lawal from Nigeria

Lawal is from Nigeria and has always been fascinated with chemistry and science. As the son of an automobile mechanic, Lawal was born with the innate desire to improve both his family's as well as his country's economic situation. This shaped Lawal's interests in pursuing further studies and research into the significance of energy. Ten years ago, when Lawal lost his mother, that desire grew exponentially.

In spite of his loss, Lawal continued to excel in his studies, received his bachelor of science degree in 2019 from the University of Ibadan, was accepted into the [EducationUSA Opportunity Funds Program](#), and began to pursue his next goal - a doctoral degree.

[EducationUSA](#) supports its international recipients throughout the U.S. higher education application process, including distributing fee waiver referrals to those who qualify. And as he applies for colleges and universities in the U.S., Lawal states that the ECE® Aid fee waiver he received “has been very significant in portraying my suitability for the Ph.D. programs despite having my first degree in Nigeria. It is a great initiative, and I hope a lot of individuals like myself get to pursue their dreams through it. Thank you very much ECE!”



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Always with gratitude,

**Zachary Holochwost (he/him/his)**  
*ECE® Aid & Market Research Manager*



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