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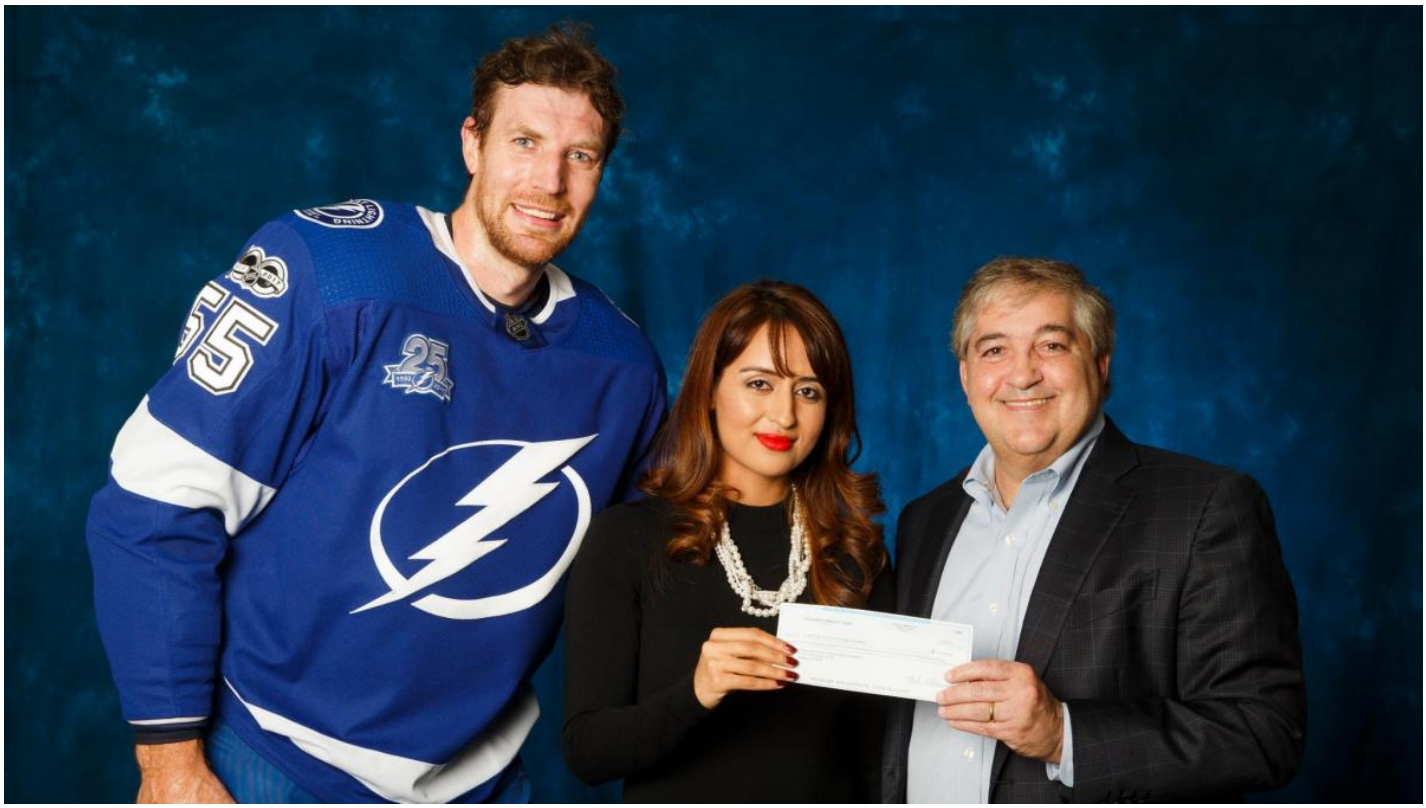
HCC in the News: Khumari Barakzai honored as Lightning Community Hero of Tomorrow

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TAMPA BAY - The Tampa Bay Lightning honored Khumari Barakzai as the second Lightning Community Hero of Tomorrow this season during the first period of tonight's game versus the Pittsburgh Penguins. Barakzai, who received a $50,000 donation from the Lightning Foundation and the Lightning Community Heroes program, will donate half the money to Hillsborough Community College, while the other half will go to a scholarship for her future education.

Growing up in Afghanistan, Khumari had to seek out education for herself as girls were not permitted to attend school. She found a neighbor who also happened to be a teacher and offered to help with chores around the woman's house in exchange for schooling. After learning all her neighbor could teach her, Khumari took it upon herself to teach others in her community. She was able to help girls see that even in tough times they can achieve freedom and independence through education.

Khumari plans to use this donation to create two different funds at Hillsborough Community College for students who need help to continue their schooling. One will be the Khumari Barakzai Endowment Fund, which will aid students with tuition, fees and books. The other fund will be the Barakzai Community Support Fund, which will help with emergencies and other hardships that might keep students from completing their education. Once Khumari completes her own education at HCC she looks forward to going back to Afghanistan to continue to teach women there.

Khumari Barakzai becomes the 276th Lightning Community Hero since Jeff and Penny Vinik introduced the Lightning Community Hero program in 2011-12 with a $10 million, five-season commitment to the Tampa Bay community. Through this evening's game, in total, the Lightning Foundation has granted $13.9 million to more than 300 different non-profits in the Greater Tampa Bay area. During the summer of 2016, the Vinik's announced that the community hero program will give away another $10-million over the next five seasons.

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