

# THE SAMUEL HUNTINGTON PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

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## Kindness and Memory

### Dear Friends of the Sam Huntington Award,

I want to write about **kindness** and **memory** in this newsletter. Last September we received a donation to the Fund of more than \$3,000 from Albert Del Toro, representing the Brayton Point Employee Trust Fund. Mr. Del Toro said that they had an employee giving fund, and had decided that if ever the power plant closed, the remaining monies should be split – the Samuel Huntington Fund being one of the beneficiaries. He added that the employees at Brayton Point were very fond of Sam and remembered him making some positive changes! I was deeply touched by this donation, and what it represents: kindness and memory!

Next year, 2019, will mark the 30th anniversary of the first award, and the intervening years have shown us over and over that our investment in these wonderful young people – in Sam's name – is social venture capital with big returns! Be-

cause of your kindness, there are communities in Philadelphia who have taken over vacant lots to grow healthy food at affordable prices; there are students in 37 states in the USA who are reducing the amount of waste in landfills by recycling the 'stuff' that other students throw out; there are girls in Senegal playing soccer and learning leadership skills; there are young people of incarcerated parents in Washington, DC who are going to college and dreaming of a better future; there are hundreds of young people in Bihar, India learning about how the digital world works and how to get well-paying jobs with their skills. Your kindness has made all of this, and so much more, happen.

This June, Shadrack Frimpong, who graduated from Penn two years ago and returned to his native Ghana to found a school for girls with a clinic attached, will travel to Buckingham Palace to be honored by H.M. Queen Elizabeth as a Young Leader who is making a difference. Shadrack



Jennifer Huntington  
Chair

is being recognized, along with several other young people from across the Commonwealth, and we are very proud of him as a Samuel Huntington Award winner!

I have no doubt that Sam would be amazed by the kindness shown by all of you in his memory. On behalf of his children, Henry and Clare, who, with so many of you, share memories of good times spent with Sam – hiking canoeing, at meetings and much more, I thank you for your kindness and for remembering Sam.

*Jennifer Huntington*

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## 2017 Award Winners Make Excellent Progress

One of the requirements of the Samuel Huntington Award is that the winners report on their midyear progress before payment of the second half of the \$15,000 Award is paid. The progress reports have been received and they again demonstrate the creativity and grit of the winners as they move forward with their extremely challenging projects and adjust their initial proposals to reflect the realities that they find on the ground. Reports on our three 2017 winners follow.

### Improving Literacy in Kenya



**Gianna Biaggi**, a graduate from Kenyon College, proposed to implement the Wale Wale Community Literacy Project in the Kibera slums of Nairobi, Kenya. The Project was to create, in partnership with the established Wale Wale organization, a new public library and literacy program, including tutoring, mentoring, scholarship counseling, and help with employment.

Unfortunately, Gianna was informed on the day that she landed in Kenya that Wale Wale was closing, and would not be able to help. Undeterred, Gianna worked with the others formerly affiliated with Wale Wale to find a site, build her library with an 80 student capacity, and stock it with 1,000 volumes. In September, the library was completed and held a formal launch. More than 250 students, representing 15 schools showed up. The library had over 350 visitors in October and over 400 in November and in December.

The completion of her library allowed Gianna to move on to the second element of her project – the development of a literacy program, which she now calls “Sunflower Fellows.” Sunflower Fellows required Gianna to create a whole new team, and to register the organization as a trust with the Kenyan government, at a time of great political unrest in Kenya during and after disputed elections. Many times Gianna and her team could not go on the streets because of the rioting and violence. Despite it all, Gianna opened Sunflower Fellows in January, a four-year literacy and leadership program for low-achieving girls attending the informal

schools in Kibera. In addition, she has started a pre-school program for girls, and she hopes to follow with literacy labs and boarding schools in both Africa and the southern United States.

Gianna has built her library and helped the under-served youth in Kibera despite the default of her expected partner and in the face of tear gas and violence in the streets. Her performance is remarkable. Her experience has not dimmed her enthusiasm for public service. In her report, she thanks us for “giving me a space to create something so meaningful; this is my life’s work. Sunflower is my dream, something that I plan to continue for many years, bringing impact too other communities throughout East Africa as well as back in the United States, my home.” Way to go, Gianna!



## Skill Training for Low-Income Mothers

After leaving Elon University, **Josephine Gardner** headed to Ethiopia to train young mothers practical skills and create a sustainable market for their products. Specifically, she proposed to enroll ten local community leaders, educate them in practical and entrepreneurial skills so that they could start businesses in the community, and then provide a marketing platform through which they could sell their goods.

Josephine has made excellent progress, despite finding her own set of obstacles. She has formed her organization and entered into partnership agreements with several local and governmental agencies, who have all approved and agreed to participate in the program. She has selected and received approval from those governmental agencies for all program participants. She has also secured a workshop space and acquired four large weaving looms, a cotton spinner and the other equipment necessary to carry on the training program and, after retaining the staff, they began training the young women. All the women are being trained in weaving, and entrepreneurship skills. They are being connected to mentors and trained to be mentors to future students. They are being provided support to help overcome the bias in weaving, which is a male dominated field.



Most fundamentally, many of the women – single, young mothers without any steady means of support – are beginning to see an opportunity to build a business and a life. Josephine's clients are in desperate straits: lacking homes, husbands, and jobs in a society with pronounced gender inequality. She is providing her students with the skills to make a reasonable living, and the support to provide them hope. The task is not easy, but Josephine is persistent, creative, and committed; she is succeeding.

## Agricultural Training for Youths in Senegal



**Antoinette Zoumanigui**, graduated from Penn and left for Senegal. Her idea was to provide under-privileged youth with vocational education and skill training based on agriculture. Antoinette's progress has been sensational. In five months, she established a fully functioning social enterprise in farming. The farm covers several hectares with a diversified crop portfolio. It has a poultry business at its core, including a chicken coop, built by the organization, that holds 1,000 chickens (she has already produced 500). The revenues from the farm will sustain the operations of the school and provide the practical skills training for the students.

After developing the curriculum and retaining the staff, Antoinette launched her education program in October, targeting 15 villages in the Mbour region of Senegal that have high numbers of 14 to 20 year-old youths who do not attend school. Twenty-one students (17 boys and four girls) were selected, most of whom had an education level equal to the fourth grade. The school provides the uniforms and school supplies to the students, relieving parents of that financial burden. The curriculum fully integrates class and farming activities. The students begin the day on the farm with vocational training, and, in the afternoon when it is too hot to work, spend time in the classroom.

Despite these successes, Antoinette also faced challenges. Her initial idea was focused on the youth in Muslim schools, whose education focused on the Koran rather than practical skills. She faced resistance from this quarter, so she expanded the offering more broadly to all students, reducing resistance from the Mullahs and expanding the population of eligible students. She, like most of our Award winners, converted an obstacle to an opportunity – a practical example of the continued creativity and persistence that is required to make her dream a reality.

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## Thank you to our Supporters!

The Samuel Huntington Fund was established in 1989 and, thanks to you, has now granted 74 Public Service Awards. Below is a list of contributors to the Fund during the past year. We sincerely appreciate your support. You can make a tax deductible contribution at any time by visiting our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/SamuelHuntingtonFund/](http://www.facebook.com/SamuelHuntingtonFund/)) or sending a check to: The Samuel Huntington Fund, c/o Ms. Amy Stacy, National Grid, 40 Sylvan Road, Waltham, MA 02451. For your convenience, a pre-addressed envelope is enclosed with this newsletter. Thank you for your consideration!

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