

THE SAMUEL HUNTINGTON PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

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Public Service During a Pandemic

Dear Supporters of the Samuel Huntington Award

These are indeed strange and uncertain times for everyone, and I have been thinking about our prior winners who continue with their projects often well beyond their year of service. What does

Alex Freid (2013) (director of PLAN) do when every college campus closes down so abruptly that he cannot organize the recycling of all the 'stuff'? What does **Yasmine Arrington** (2015) do for the students whose parents are incarcerated and who want to continue their college education but who might not have a computer? What does **Alex Epstein** (2014) do with his Urban Creators – community vegetable gardening for inner city folks - when they cannot get together to plan and plant? What does **Brett Davidson** (2016) do with and for the people detained in jail in Connecticut because they cannot pay their bail? I stay in contact with each of them, and as you might imagine, they are rolling up their sleeves and finding ways to meet the challenges of Covid-19 and continue their work despite the restrictions. Creativity, ingenuity and above all 'grit' are the hallmarks of so many of

our winners!

Here is one concrete example, from Alex Epstein in Philadelphia. Urban Creators has been declared an essential business, and so they are able to plant, but without the important element of socializing as they work the garden – folks doing the digging, but at a distance. They have set up a Mobile Market to deliver the nutritious produce to neighbors and supporters, and will conduct some workshops on-line as a second best to being together planting, harvesting and cooking.

Despite the restrictions of Covid-19, we interviewed six finalists this year, remotely, and chose three. You will read more about them in our next newsletter. Suffice it to say that they are each determined to continue their proposals, one in Ghana, one in Montana and one in Hawai'i! I feel sure they will each make us proud, and follow in the footsteps of our prior winners.

Speaking of our prior winners, **Dr. Vivek H. Murthy**, (1997), who served as Surgeon General of the US under President Obama, has been focusing his attention on loneliness, and just published a New York Times bestseller: *Togeth-*



Jennifer Huntington
Chair

er, the Healing Power of Human Connections in a Sometimes Lonely World. In our physically disconnected world right now, it feels very timely to think about what we miss and how important those contacts are: hugs, high fives, handshakes, holding the hands of loved ones, and so much more.

We have great pride in our winners who, despite Covid-19, are finding ways to continue their fights for social justice, to improve our environment, to help the most disadvantaged in our world, and to pass the message to another generation that service to others helps us all connect to each other. Your donations to the Samuel Huntington Fund will help us find, and fund, these outstanding young people, who with their energy, vision, and grit truly exemplify what the Fund stands for: a wonderful memorial to Sam! Thank you all.

Jennifer Huntington

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Update on 2019 Award Winners

The progress reports by 2019 Award Winners demonstrate again the ongoing creativity, responsiveness, and adaptability by our Winners to conditions on the ground and the needs of their communities.

The Native Youth Leadership Science Academy

Johnny Buck started the Native Youth Leadership Science Academy after graduating from Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, Washington. The project creates a youth education camp, which teaches an integrated program of Native and Western science, so that students appreciate both forms of education.

Johnny began with a summer program at the Pine Needle Group camp near Mount Ranier, Washington. To support the Native Science portion of his program, he reached out to the tribal elders, Puckhyahtoot of the Wanapum Nation and Maliah of the Yakama Nation, who helped plan the curriculum to meet the gaps in Native education experienced by many Native American youths. The resulting program emphasized “‘belonging,’ where every participant, from the youngest to the oldest, has a role and responsibility to the whole.”

The program was a success. It covered Western sciences from botany to engineering, together with Native cosmology and values. Johnny reports that many of the students expressed “in an emotional manner, that it was the first time experiencing many aspects of their culture and wanted to learn more so that they could pass it on to others when they get older.” Puckhyahtoot and Maliah, who helped provide this connection are committed to continue with future NYSLA camps beginning this Fall.



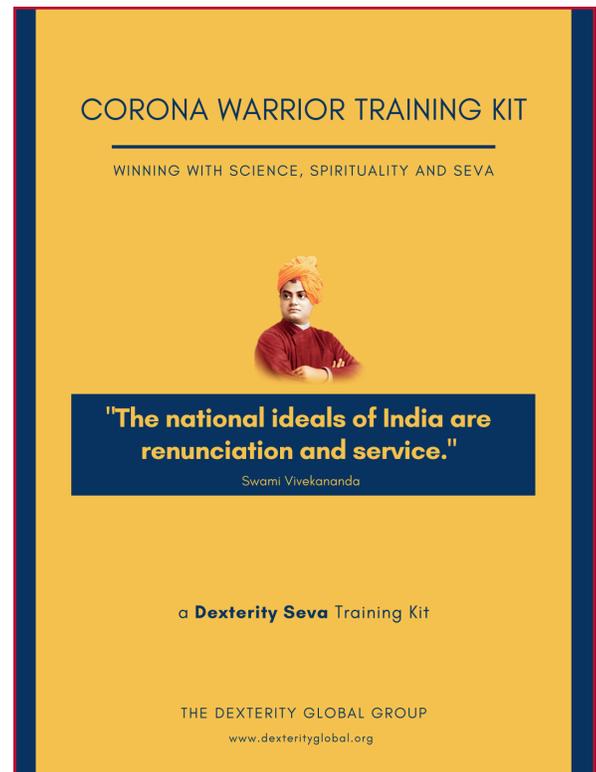
RECONNECTING WITH ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS AND KNOWLEDGE

NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH WHO ARE DESCENDENTS FROM THE YAKAMA, WANAPUM, WARM SPRINGS, MUCKLESHOOT, PUYALLUP AND COLVILLE TRIBES CAMPED TOGETHER NEAR MT. RAINEER AND STRENGTHENED THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER, THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS, TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL LANGUAGES

NATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP SCIENCE ACADEMY

Dexterity Seva in India

After graduating from Tufts, **Swaraj Priyadarshi** started Dexterity Seva. Dexterity Seva uses a comprehensive communications platform to encourage public service by the youth of India. Specifically, Dexterity Seva uses a computer website and outreach program to enlist middle and high school students in public service projects. The first opportunity for a major public service project was presented by the Corona Virus in India. After the national lock down on March 24, Dexterity Seva sent 850,000 Corona Warrior Test Kits to children across India. The kit trains the children in the science of the virus, lists the measures individuals should use to control the spread of the disease, and calls upon them to create a children's movement in support of the Prime Minister's CARES Fund. Parents, children, and educators have all provided wonderful feedback, and the kit is being considered by the Indian Government for circulation more broadly. The information in the kit is also being translated into a variety of different languages to reach all of the communities in India.



Youth Disability Education in Portland, Oregon

After graduating from Williams, **Phacelia Cramer** turned to her project focused on an after school program for students with disabilities, together with a sibling support group. Over the summer, she met with special education teachers, non-profit disability organizations, and other organizations focused on helping families with young disabled children. She found that the Portland school districts enrolled disabled children in three elementary schools having appropriate facilities for the students. She met with special education teachers and after school coordinators in each school and found them all to be enthusiastic about her program. To understand the needs better and get to know the students, she accepted a temporary instructional assistant position at one school, Menlo Park Elementary, where she helped autistic first to third grade children, many from homes where English was not spoken.

At Menlo Park, she started her after school program on Mondays and Wednesdays called "Art for Accessibility." The program includes disabled and non-disabled children, and teaches both how to communicate with each other. For example, nonverbal autistic children communicate through CORE Boards, and the program teaches non-disabled children the methodology so that all students can communicate. At the students' suggestion, the school has placed CORE Boards throughout the school and on the playgrounds. Phacelia has also partnered with the Autistic Community Action Program to support their summer camp, and to implement her ideas for family resource nights and programs for disabled youth and their families, including a resource booklet that will be available in several languages for families with disabled children.

Phacelia's project demonstrates the value of adjusting her proposal to the real needs of the people on the scene. She started her time in Portland by building and strengthening relationships in the community she intended to serve, and getting to know what services already existed for these families and what services were lacking. The resulting enhancements to her program produced buy-in from both teachers and students.

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Thank you to our supporters!

The Samuel Huntington Fund was established in 1989 and, thanks to you, has now granted 80 Public Service Awards. Please keep the Fund in mind as you consider your charitable giving. You can make a tax deductible contribution at any time by visiting our new website (www.samuelhuntingtonaward.org), our Facebook page (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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