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BAY AREA PHILANTHROPIST AWARDS 5 CALIFORNIA TEENS \$36,000 EACH WITH A VISION TO “REPAIR THE WORLD”

From Math to Magic, Fashion to Education—Teens Build Tolerance and Community

SAN FRANCISCO, June 28, 2012—The Helen Diller Family Foundation today announced the 2012 recipients of the prestigious Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards. Since its inception six years ago, nearly 750 California Jewish teens have been nominated, and more than one million dollars has been given to further the vision of 30 teens.

With a commitment to nurturing our future Jewish leaders, the Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards annually gives \$36,000 each to five California teens in recognition of social action service demonstrating the spirit of *tikkun olam* – a central precept of Judaism meaning *repair of the world*. To honor the 2012 recipients, a celebratory luncheon will be held in San Francisco on Monday, August 20, 2012.

2012 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award winners are:

- **Zak Kukoff from Thousand Oaks/L.A. (Age 17), *Autism Ambassadors in Action***
- **Joseph Langerman from Coronado/San Diego (Age 19), *Voices Against Hatred***
- **Daniel Rosenthal from Santa Rosa (Age 15), *Magic Performances Healing Those In Need***
- **Adam Weinstein from Los Angeles (Age 18), *Math & Science Comes Alive for Youth***
- **Celine Yousefzadeh from Los Angeles (Age 19), *Fashion Shows for War-Torn Israel***

“The Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards began as my simple idea in 2007 to empower five future Californian leaders in their visions to repair the world. Today, it has exceeded my wildest imagination,” said Helen Diller, president of the sponsoring foundation. “With tact and complete commitment, these amazingly creative teens are tackling diverse and gripping issues head-on—they’re taking the first steps toward becoming true leaders, each one envisioning a brighter, more humane and more interconnected world. To see these teens living so thoughtfully, with compassion for the benefit of all simply takes my breath away!”

The awardees’ projects include a non-profit that empowers teens to teach and better understand their special-needs classmates; a student-run program that promotes awareness and prevention of bullying in schools; a magic performance initiative to bring joy to the sick, disabled, elderly and others in need throughout the nation; a math and science enrichment program for underprivileged fifth-graders in Los Angeles; and a student-run fashion show that raises funds for Israeli charities. These young social activists have shown exceptional leadership, and in many ways are teachers of tolerance through promoting acceptance and kindness within their distinct projects. Use of the award money is largely unrestricted, and recipients can use it to fund college or to further implement their vision for making the world a better place.

The teens were selected by a panel composed of educators and community leaders from San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Marin, Yolo, Placer, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Alameda and

Orange Counties. Candidates completed a detailed application describing their projects, goals, inspirations and challenges, fundraising tactics and ultimate accomplishments. Eligible applicants were California residents, between 13 and 19 years old, who self-identify as Jewish.

2012 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award Recipients and their Projects:

Zak Kukoff (Thousand Oaks): Fostering Friendships, Tolerance & Learning Among Students

Zak Kukoff became sensitive to students with special needs when his cousin was diagnosed with autism four years ago. Moved by her challenges, he created ***Autism Ambassadors*** to not only help his fellow classmates access the right tools to be successful in the classroom, but also help them build lasting friendships and promote tolerance. Zak has seen the simple offer of a new friendship change students' lives completely, and the ripple effect of kindness continues: ***Autism Ambassadors*** has grown into a national non-profit providing more than 1,000 specialized lesson plans that are peer-led in more than 25 schools. It has also given \$15,000 in grants to teachers through its fellowship program. Zak continues to lead and expand the initiative and will be releasing his first book, ***The Autism Ambassadors' Handbook***, later this fall.

Joseph Langerman (Coronado): "Hate Hurts" Inspires Teens To Take A Stand Against Bullying

Joseph Langerman was bullied at school and knows how isolating it feels when no one stands up on your behalf. Not wanting others to feel alone or neglected, Joseph started ***Voices Against Cruelty, Hatred and Intolerance (VACHI)*** to educate teachers, students and parents about the negative effects bullying can have on youth. To convince his administration to take action, he developed a survey illustrating the extent of bullying on his campus. Joseph used this information to promote increased solidarity among his classmates, and to petition his school board to adopt policies that would educate – not ignore or punish – first-time offenders of bullying. The awareness campaign inspired an additional school to start its own ***VACHI*** chapter, and through Facebook it has created an international following. ***VACHI*** raises funding through in-kind donations and sales of t-shirts and wristbands Joseph designed proclaiming that ***Hate Hurts***. Joseph is paying it forward, and continues to work to establish more chapters at surrounding high schools.

Daniel Rosenthal (Santa Rosa): Magic Performances Turn "Oy" Into "Joy" For Those In Need

As a seven-year-old, Daniel Rosenthal began to perform magic shows for children and adults receiving medical care at local Bay Area hospitals. Encouraged by the joy he was able to share, Daniel started ***Magic Is Medicine***, which matches volunteer magicians with those needing good cheer. Inspired by the service of iconic magicians Harry Houdini and David Copperfield, Daniel has teamed up with magicians and leaders of the world's foremost magic organizations to coordinate performances in hospitals, schools, and rehabilitation and assisted living centers across the country. To engage and inspire others, Daniel also created student clubs that teach youth simple therapeutic magic tricks. With volunteers all over the nation and a prestigious Board of Advisors, Daniel – who aspires to be a medical doctor – is strategically expanding ***Magic Is Medicine***; this summer he'll travel to Israel with hopes of establishing his first international branch.

Adam Weinstein (Los Angeles): Teen Prodigy Brings Math & Science To Life For L.A. Youth

Adam Weinstein's Jewish upbringing instilled in him the importance of helping others and a strong belief that education leads to success, which is why he started a not-for-profit to encourage and stimulate an enthusiasm for math and science in youth. ***Archimedes Learning*** engages underprivileged children in Los Angeles public schools with hands-on, creative and fun activities that are math and science-focused. His after-school lessons include creating a submarine out of a water bottle to learn about buoyancy; using paper cups tied together with string to explore how sound travels; and counting M&Ms to understand ratios. An aspiring astrophysicist, Adam has successfully completed competitive internships at UCLA's Department of Engineering and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. His out-of-the-box thinking has transformed fifth graders from unenthusiastic to passionate about subjects that are vital to America's economic and technological advancement. ***Archimedes Learning*** currently operates in three Los Angeles schools with four volunteer teachers, and Adam plans to expand within California and ultimately across the United States.

Celine Yousefzadeh (Los Angeles): Students Strut The Catwalk To Help War-Torn Israeli Youth

After hearing about the devastation of a high school in the heart of Sderot, Israel – hard hit in 2007 by rockets from the Gaza Strip – Celine Yousefzadeh felt an emotional obligation to help. With a fashion-forward friend, Celine started ***Fashion with Compassion***, a student-run charity event. Her first fashion show raised \$5,000 – a check she delivered personally during her semester in Israel with Milken Community High School. The second show drew a crowd of 300 and raised \$6,000 for Atidim, a program for advancing the underprivileged in Israel, and the third show drew 600 people and raised \$10,000 for Save a Child’s Heart, an Israeli-based humanitarian project that provides children with heart surgeries. The runway continues to be a lesson in social entrepreneurship with more than a hundred students participating as planners, stylists and models, and with high-profile companies as sponsors. The annual show is the most successful fundraiser in the high school’s history and Celine is already working to implement ***Fashion with Compassion*** in Jewish schools across the nation.

The Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards initiative is one of a number of projects funded by the Helen Diller Family Foundation to develop leadership in teens and enhance Jewish education. Bay Area philanthropist Helen Diller believes that charitable giving is a fundamental part of living a full and accountable life. Now in its 13th year of giving, the Foundation has granted more than \$200 million to support education, the arts, medical research and development, leadership training programs for teens, and many other charitable endeavors.

For more information, or to nominate a teen for next year’s Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards, visit www.jewishfed.org/diller/teenawards or contact Jacque Seaman at (212) 561-7456 jacque.seaman@morris-king.com