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**15 OF AMERICA'S BRIGHTEST YOUNG LEADERS RECEIVE
NATIONAL AWARD AND \$36,000 FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO IGNITING CHANGE**

The Helen Diller Family Foundation's 13th Annual Awards Honor Young Leaders Making Strides to Empower Youth, Initiate Dialogue and Shatter Stigmas

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, June 11, 2019 — The Helen Diller Family Foundation, a supporting foundation of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, today announced the recipients of its annual Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards. Now in its 13th year, the national Awards honor the work of teen leaders who are committed to igniting change in their communities and around the globe.

This year's Award recipients are the creators of non-profit organizations, educational initiatives, student-led volunteer programs, and other projects that make significant strides in critical issues of our time, including: expanding access to mental health services, educating youth about the current political climate, and supporting immigrants and refugees struggling to improve their lives. Each awardee will receive \$36,000 in support of their philanthropic vision or toward their education. Full descriptions of all 15 Award recipients and their initiatives can be found at: www.dillerteenawards.org.

The Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards began in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2007 as the vision of Bay Area philanthropist Helen Diller. The awards promote and empower Jewish teens who demonstrate and exemplify the spirit of *tikkun olam*, a central Jewish value meaning "repair the world." Since 2007, the program has awarded more than \$4 million to 129 teens in recognition of their vision, innovation, and demonstration of leadership.

"Now more than ever, young people are on the front lines of change, leading the way for our communities and the world," said Jackie Safier, President of the Helen Diller Family Foundation and Helen Diller's daughter. "The 2019 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awardees are confronting the most difficult and divisive issues of our time by bringing passion, commitment, and their own personal engagement. These teens remind us that people of any age can make a difference in the world, and they are inspirational examples for us all."

Fostering a collaborative community among recipients and bolstering national recognition of today's young leaders is a primary goal of the Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards. Recipients inspire their peers to deeply engage in *tikkun olam* through leadership opportunities and volunteerism in youth-led organizations. Past recipients create meaningful relationships with new awardees through networking and mentorship. Many awardees have also been recognized by some of the most prestigious institutions and leaders, including the United Nations Foundation, the Jefferson Awards, The White House, and former President Barack Obama.

The 2019 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award recipients were selected by committees comprised of community leaders and educators located in cities around the country. Candidates completed detailed applications describing their projects, goals, impact, inspirations and challenges, fundraising tactics and major accomplishments. Eligible applicants were United States residents, between 13 and 19 years of age at the time of the application deadline, who self-identify as Jewish. A celebratory awards ceremony honoring the teens will be held in San Francisco on Monday, August 19, 2019.

The 2019 recipients encourage anyone interested in nominating a teen to begin the nomination/application process at www.dillerteenawards.org.

Meet the 15 recipients of the 2019 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards:

Ethan Asher - Roswell, GA - *March for Our Lives Georgia*

Ethan was inspired by fellow teen activists and started *March for Our Lives Georgia* to help stop gun violence.

Malcolm Asher - Portland, OR - *ArtPass International*

Malcolm improves patient experience, reduces fear and stigma, and brings the healing power of art to children in hospitals with *ArtPass International*.

Lucy Beckett - Elk Grove, CA - *Camp Nefesh*

Lucy brings the magic of summer camp to refugee children and helps them make friends and adjust to their new homes through *Camp Nefesh*.

Beatriz De Oliveira - San Diego, CA - *Books for a Change*

Beatriz developed coursework and collects donations to purchase books for daycares around the world sharing the power of fiction through *Books for a Change*.

John Finkelman - San Diego, CA - *Equal Voice Initiative*

John used his own experiences with a mixed identity and started *Equal Voice Initiative* to address the lack of support given to newly arrived refugees.

Elyse Forman - Los Angeles, CA - *Girls in STEM*

Elyse began an after school program called *Girls in STEM* to help close the gender gap in science and engineering.

Grace Freedman - Ponte Vedra Beach, FL - *JaxTHRIVE*

Grace and her organization *JaxTHRIVE* use one-on-one mentoring and tutoring to improve the academic performance of refugee children.

Arielle Geismar - New York, NY - *NYC Says Enough (NYCSE)*

Arielle created *NYC Says Enough (NYCSE)*, an outlet for teen action, to address the systemic causes of gun violence and hold elected officials accountable.

Jessica Goldberg - Farmington Hills, MI - *Sib4Sib*

Jessica discovered a lack of resources available for siblings of individuals who encounter mental health challenges and established *Sib4Sib*.

Ethan Hirschberg - Carlsbad, CA - *The Journey Through Autism*

Ethan shares his own experiences with the world and inspires others via his blog *The Journey Through Autism*, as well as through other written work and public speaking.

Adam Hoffman - Houston, TX - *Day of Unity*

Adam decided to put people before politics with *Day of Unity*, an organization devoted to shrinking the gap between political parties.

Britton Masback - Portland, OR - *Youth Educating Police (YEP)*

Britton founded *Youth Educating Police* to stem the widening gap between police and youth and to combat inequitable policing by facilitating dialogue and designing training modules.

Katelyn McInerney - Birmingham, AL - *Special Siblings*

Katelyn began *Special Siblings* in response to her own unmet needs for support as a sister to someone with special needs.

Solomon Olshin - Portland, OR - *Shine*

Solomon founded *Shine* to help meet the basic needs of houseless Portlanders living in off-grid communities by developing cutting-edge, environmentally-sustainable and cost-effective technologies.

Casey Sherman - Parkland, FL - *Empower the People*

Casey and *Empower the People* work to provide voices to the voiceless through peer-to-peer voter registration and community engagement.

**Complete descriptions are included below. Additional information on each of the recipients can be found at:*

<http://www.dillerteenawards.org/>

2019 DILLER TEEN *TIKKUN OLAM* AWARD RECIPIENTS AND THEIR PROJECTS:

Ethan Asher - Roswell, GA - *March for Our Lives Georgia*

Ethan was inspired by fellow teen activists and started *March for Our Lives Georgia* to help stop gun violence.

Ethan Asher knew he had to do something. Watching the grief of his community as they mourned the loss of a friend killed in the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, Ethan couldn't stand by. Inspired by the actions of those who survived the attack, Ethan founded *March for Our Lives Georgia*, an affiliate of *March for Our Lives*. Using education and empowerment strategies directed toward youth participation and local government, *March for Our Lives Georgia* takes a comprehensive approach to ending gun violence. Ethan and *March for Our Lives Georgia* not only organized, but executed, one of the largest demonstrations ever held in the history of the state of Georgia. To date, *March For Our Lives Georgia* has interacted with over 80,000 people, teaching responsible gun ownership and registering voters through *Get Out The Vote*.

Malcolm Asher - Portland, OR - *ArtPass International*

Malcolm improves patient experience, reduces fear and stigma, and brings the healing power of art to children in hospitals with *ArtPass International*.

After learning that 5.4 million children die every year from preventable diseases, Malcolm Asher realized he could help through art. Around the world, many children hide their symptoms until they are critically ill and medical treatment is not as successful. For many, hospitals are deeply feared and stigmatized. This led him to start *ArtPass International*, a non-profit working to increase the willingness to utilize the medical system and lift the spirits of children facing hospital stays through the power of interactive art. Malcolm and *ArtPass International* have created positive patient experiences for almost 20,000 children by creating and implementing a curriculum focused on art projects. *ArtPass International* doesn't teach art. It teaches kids to do art and it is this participation that makes all the difference. With 400+ Global Ambassadors, Malcolm hopes to continue to spread his love of art and its power to heal to hospitals around the world.

Lucy Beckett - Elk Grove, CA - *Camp Nefesh*

Lucy brings the magic of summer camp to refugee children and helps them make friends and adjust to their new homes through *Camp Nefesh*.

When Lucy Beckett set out for Seattle in the summer of 2017 she had no idea the impact it would have on her future. She knew she was going to be working at the Mitzvah Corps Pacific Northwest summer camp for refugee children, but she never dreamed what would happen next. After watching the way the campers responded to the experience, she knew the power summer camp could have. Lucy went home determined to bring this type of transformational experience to refugee populations closer to her home. She immediately began working to start *Camp Nefesh*, an organization created to bring the typical American summer camp experience to refugee children in the Sacramento area. *Camp Nefesh* offers children new to the country the opportunity to connect with one another as well as get acclimated with their new home all while swimming, dancing, playing, and just being kids.

Beatriz De Oliveira - San Diego, CA - *Books for a Change*

Beatriz developed coursework and collects donations to purchase books for daycares around the world sharing the power of fiction through *Books for a Change*.

Being a lifelong lover of literature, Beatriz De Oliveira was taken aback. She had assumed the daycares, or *creches*, in her hometown of Campinas, Brazil would be full of books. It wasn't until she arrived, dropping off the box of toys she was donating, that she saw she was wrong. There weren't any books. Speaking with a staff member, Beatriz learned that most *creches* were funded by the government and could only afford the barest of necessities. *Books for a Change* was Beatriz's response. *Books for a Change* collects and donates books to daycares around the world. To date, Beatriz and her organization have worked to serve over 10,000 children, giving them access to the life changing power of books. Additionally, she is developing a curriculum for daycare instructors to teach the importance of and to foster a lifelong passion for reading.

John Finkelman - San Diego, CA - *Equal Voice Initiative*

John used his own experiences with a mixed identity and started *Equal Voice Initiative* to address the lack of support given to newly arrived refugees.

John Finkelman understands the challenges refugees face. As a first generation American, he identifies with those who are unsure of where "home" really is. He has witnessed firsthand the devastating effects poverty has on families and the challenges it brings to the process of building a life. All this led John to start *Equal Voice Initiative*, an organization dedicated to supporting refugee families transitioning to life in the United States. The lack of government assistance his family received when they arrived in the U.S. inspired John to make sure other families in a similar situation had access to more resources. *Equal Voice Initiative* has served nearly 5,000 refugees since John started the organization. With a conscious focus on teaching practical life skills, *Equal Voice Initiative* works in the San Diego area to help refugee families lay down stable roots by teaching them things like money management, navigating public transit, CPR, and English.

Elyse Forman - Los Angeles, CA - *Girls in STEM*

Elyse began an after school program called *Girls in STEM* to help close the gender gap in science and engineering.

It only had to happen once for Elyse Forman to realize the truth. After being silenced in a high level math and science class, the discrimination facing women in science, technology, engineering, and math became all too clear. Armed with a burning desire to make a difference, Elyse began to do some research. She learned about the gender gap and the cultural factors that play into its existence. Starting *Girls in STEM*, a weekly after school program aimed at interesting low-income elementary school aged girls in science and technology, was Elyse's way of making a difference. Using a curriculum she designed, built around hands-on experiments conducted as a group and follow-up experiments to do at home, Elyse matched her participants with student mentors from partnering high schools. *Girls in STEM* sparks a love of a science, breaks down barriers, and opens doors for young women.

Grace Freedman - Ponte Vedra Beach, FL - *JaxTHRIVE*

Grace and her organization *JaxTHRIVE* use one-on-one mentoring and tutoring to improve the academic performance of refugee children.

A fateful day of volunteering for World Relief, a global humanitarian nonprofit, changed Grace Freedman's life. It was there, during the summer of 2017, she witnessed, firsthand, the cultural, linguistic, and economic difficulties facing refugee children. On the way home she began dreaming up a way to help. She imagined an organization serving Jacksonville's refugee population, the 6th largest in the country, matching newly arrived children with local students for one-on-one mentoring and tutoring. And so, *JaxTHRIVE* was born. Grace, along with her co-founder, have attracted volunteers from twelve different area schools, including the University of North Florida. To date, over 100 student volunteers have happily donated their Saturday mornings on a rotating basis, ensuring an easier transition for students who have come to this country under extraordinary circumstances. Together they've developed a formal tracking system that incentivizes academic performance and has produced demonstrable, measurable results.

Arielle Geismar - New York, NY - *NYC Says Enough (NYCSE)*

Arielle created *NYC Says Enough (NYCSE)*, an outlet for teen action, to address the systemic causes of gun violence and hold elected officials accountable.

As news of the 17 students murdered in Parkland, FL spread, Arielle Geismar felt numb. "It could have been me. It could have been one my friends. It could have happened here," she thought. Realizing the deep complexity of the gun violence epidemic, Arielle resolved to be part of the solution. She created *NYC Says Enough (NYCSE)*, an organization devoted to addressing the institutional nature of gun violence and an outlet for direct teen and youth action. *NYCSE* focuses on reaching out and connecting students, some in disproportionately impacted communities, with their representatives to advocate for stricter gun control laws. At their first rally *NYCSE* attracted upwards of 5,000 students. Since then Arielle and *NYCSE* have engaged thousands of people with their message through community involvement. They've sponsored numerous letter writing campaigns and created an independently researched, publicly accessible database tracking New York politicians and their voting record on gun reform.

Jessica Goldberg - Farmington Hills, MI - *Sib4Sib*

Jessica discovered a lack of resources available for siblings of individuals who encounter mental health challenges and established *Sib4Sib*.

It was her own personal experience that led Jessica Goldberg to create *Sib4Sib*. As a sibling of someone dealing with mental health issues, she understood all too well what happens when those in supportive roles need support themselves. One failed internet search after another led Jessica to realize that peer-to-peer support groups and other resources don't exist for the siblings of individuals with mental illness or disabilities. So she created one. *Sib4Sib* connects people ages 6-18 with the resources they need for their own mental health while actively helping a brother or sister deal with theirs. All support groups are facilitated by licensed mental health professionals and give families the information and support they need. *Sib4Sib* uses workshops, community events, ad-campaigns, and public presentations to raise mental health awareness and support for the supporters.

Ethan Hirschberg - Carlsbad, CA - *The Journey Through Autism*

Ethan shares his own experiences with the world and inspires others via his blog *The Journey Through Autism*, as well as through other written work and public speaking.

As Ethan Hirschberg sat in class at his local synagogue, a light in his head flickered onto an idea. Listening to his teacher explain the “creator versus victim theory,” he knew what he had to do; he had to become a creator. Diagnosed with High Functioning Autism at the age of two, Ethan had, up until that point, felt like a victim of his circumstances. After some soul searching, he decided sharing his story and experiences with the world was what he wanted to do. *The Journey Through Autism* is full of inspiring content aimed at educating people all over the world about autism, eliminating stigmas, and inviting empathy between neurodiverse and neurotypical communities. Now reaching over 40,000 subscribers, Ethan is a sought out resource for educators, fellow students, and employers around the country, helping people better understand and more thoughtfully interact with people with autism.

Adam Hoffman - Houston, TX - *Day of Unity*

Adam decided to put people before politics with *Day of Unity*, an organization devoted to shrinking the gap between political parties.

Adam Hoffman was struck by a paradox. On one hand he witnessed the polarity politics, divisiveness, and othering of the 2016 presidential election. Then, six short months later, he saw the other hand. Inspired by the coming together of the different communities of his hometown in response to Hurricane Harvey, Adam had an idea. “What if the level of cooperation between different people during Harvey were possible in politics?” The next day he went to work making his vision a reality. *Day of Unity* puts people before politics. It facilitates leadership conventions and workshops bringing high school students together from both sides of the aisle. Adam and *Day of Unity* have developed a curriculum and are working with the Texas Board of Education. Adam expects the curriculum will be approved to bring Adam’s message and methods of unity to over 200,000 students by 2021.

Britton Masback - Portland, OR - *Youth Educating Police (YEP)*

Britton founded *Youth Educating Police* to stem the widening gap between police and youth and to combat inequitable policing by facilitating dialogue and designing training modules.

Following a number of officer-involved shootings and the inappropriate use of force by police with young people, Britton founded *Youth Educating Police (YEP)*, a non-profit that bridges the gap between teens and police. Britton and *YEP* created the PolicePeacePDX forum, which facilitates cooperation among police officers, teens, local activists and lawmakers to reduce tension and develop consensus around key policies. *YEP* has also created training modules for police officers to help deepen understanding and improve communication with younger members of society. *YEP’s* goal is to introduce aspects of its training module to all 1,000 Portland police officers by the end of this year. Britton is currently working on creating a digital version of the training modules to scale the program across the entire country. *YEP’s* forum is already available to students around the country.

Katelyn McInerney - Birmingham, AL - *Special Siblings*

Katelyn began *Special Siblings* in response to her own unmet needs for support as a sister to someone with special needs.

After spending more hours than she could count in more waiting rooms than she could remember, Katelyn McInerney realized she wasn't alone. Each of these waiting rooms were full of kids just like her. Kids who probably also felt powerless, scared, alone, and like no one understood what they were going through as they waited for their siblings to receive the treatment they needed. Added to that, a quick internet search for sibling support groups left Katelyn discouraged. There weren't any. So she started one. *Special Siblings* is a non-profit designed to provide a safe space for children with special needs siblings to share their unique circumstances. Katelyn and *Special Siblings* enlist volunteer experts to facilitate monthly support group meetings designed to create a safe space for expressing emotions and participating in activities to increase understanding and empathy. Through her work, Katelyn is de-stigmatizing mental and physical disabilities.

Solomon Olshin - Portland, OR - *Shine*

Solomon founded *Shine* to help meet the basic needs of houseless Portlanders living in off-grid communities by developing cutting-edge, environmentally-sustainable and cost-effective technologies.

Shine builds upon work Solomon led with his school's InvenTeam and Community Engineering groups. Solomon led the building and installation of 85 solar-powered "JuiceBox" devices that provide hundreds of houseless Portlanders with light, power, heat and internet access, improving their daily lives while providing access to social services, online job applications, and connection with family and community. Solomon also led the development of ShowerPod and WashPod, solar-hybrid bio-filtered mobile hygiene facilities that provide houseless Portlanders with clean hot water for handwashing, dental care, showers and laundry while incorporating greywater irrigation systems that nourish gardens in these communities. *Shine* also trains houseless Portlanders to build and maintain JuiceBoxes and pays them for their work, helping them gain dignity, independence, and employability as they transition out of homelessness.

Casey Sherman - Parkland, FL - *Empower the People*

Casey and *Empower the People* work to provide voices to the voiceless through peer-to-peer voter registration and community engagement.

Watching 30,000 people unite in the name of hope opened Casey Sherman's eyes to the way the future could be. Casey was a lead coordinator for March for Our Lives Parkland, the student-led demonstration in support of legislation to prevent gun violence following the February 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Beholding the power of the supposed powerless gave Casey the chills. And ideas. She set about building a platform that would bring more people together to work toward a brighter future. Thus *Empower the People*, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization facilitating high school peer-to-peer voting registration came to be. Not only do Casey and *Empower the People* work with *Get Out the Vote* to engage students about the importance of political engagement, they've also created a curriculum being implemented in Washington, DC area schools raising high school students' awareness about social issues.