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**June 17, 2020**

*Photos, videos, and interviews on request*

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**15 TEEN LEADERS WIN NATIONAL AWARD FOR EFFECTING SOCIAL CHANGE**

***The Helen Diller Family Foundation's 14th Annual Awards recognize teens whose creative work and activism inspire communities across the nation.***

SAN FRANCISCO — The Helen Diller Family Foundation, a supporting foundation of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties, announced the 15 recipients of its 14th annual Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards.

This year's award recipients are working across the globe to address **urgent issues, from racial justice to climate change to supporting seniors**. Each awardee will receive \$36,000 to support their work or further their education. Full descriptions of all 15 Award recipients and their projects can be found at: [www.dillerteenawards.org](http://www.dillerteenawards.org).

While the awardees submitted their applications before the pandemic and ongoing calls for justice and racial equity across the nation, many awardees have already found innovative ways to adapt their work and support growing community needs, reaching those who have limited access to resources because of COVID-19, and creating racial justice advocacy materials for teens.

"In the spirit of ***tikkun olam*** (to repair the world), these teens are being recognized for their extraordinary efforts," said Phyllis Cook, Chief Philanthropic Consultant to the Helen Diller Family Foundation. "Between the health and economic consequences of COVID-19 and the fight for racial justice, communities across the country are suffering in many ways right now. In the face of these challenges, the Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award recipients exhibit courage, commitment, and compassion, bringing hope for the future. These young leaders inspire all of us to do our part to repair the world."

The national awards recognize young voices for change and activism who are committed to ideas that address the world's most pressing challenges in the communities around them. This year's cohort will join a network of awardees who have led marches on Washington, enacted new legislation, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer research, and developed more inclusive and responsive school policies and practices. **They have received recognition from prestigious institutions and leaders, including the United Nations Foundation, the Jefferson Awards Foundation, and former President Barack Obama.** Additionally, the recipients will have the opportunity to network and share their collective and individual

achievements through virtual settings to ensure everyone is kept safe during these uncertain times.

The 2020 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards recipients were selected by committees of community leaders and educators located in cities around the country. Candidates completed detailed applications describing their projects, goals, inspirations, and challenges, fundraising tactics, the issue areas they address, and measurable impacts. Eligible applicants were United States residents, between 13 and 19 years of age at the time of the application deadline, who self-identified as Jewish.

For more information on this year's awardees, please read their bios below and visit [www.dillerteenawards.org](http://www.dillerteenawards.org) or follow Diller Teen Awards on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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### **Max Astrachan (18)**

*Enola, PA*

Discrimination based on race, culture, religion, and sexual orientation is all too prevalent in high schools across America. After witnessing firsthand the detrimental effects of harassment at his own high school, Max Astrachan founded Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together (SPIRIT) Council. SPIRIT addresses discrimination by organizing diversity programs, school-wide assemblies and trainings, revising policy, changing curriculum, and networking with other diversity groups across the country to create models for ending discrimination. Since founding SPIRIT, there has been significant reduction in discrimination incidents within Max's own high school of 3,000+ students, policies have been updated in the local district handbook regarding the use of welcoming language, and SPIRIT has received national attention for its inclusion model, informing other districts across the country. SPIRIT is looking towards expanding programming into elementary and middle schools to begin addressing discrimination at an earlier age.

### **Abe Baker-Butler (18)**

*Rye Brook, NY*

Deeply impacted by stories of family members who died from smoking-induced illnesses, Abe Baker-Butler took comfort in his peers' strong anti-cigarette stance, knowing they would never suffer from the same addiction. However, once in high school, the prevalence of e-cigarettes took hold of his friends' despite their previous anti-nicotine sentiments. Abe took matters into his own hands and co-founded Students Against Nicotine (SAN), which works to reduce and eradicate teen vaping through legislative advocacy and education in New York State. SAN has connected with thousands of New York teens through peer-to-peer education, webinars, rallies, and conferences. In 2019, Abe helped pass Tobacco 21 legislation, raising the age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21 years old. Most recently, SAN helped ban the use of flavors in e-cigarettes across New York State. Abe plans on expanding SAN's reach by developing a local chapter model to be replicated across the country.

### **Nathan Balk King (19)**

*Provincetown, MA*

When he was 16 years old, Nathan Balk King attended the National High School Model United Nations (NHSMUN) conference, where he was the only Native American student delegate. Inspired by the significance of the United Nations to the Native community in the United States, Nathan created Model United Nations: Indigenous (MUNI) to empower indigenous communities

by giving Native high school students the tools, impetus, and confidence to participate in public policy and human rights advocacy, from the community level to the global stage. He successfully recruited 12 delegates and fundraised to send them to the following year's NHSMUN conference. The International Model United Nations Association (IMUNA) endorsed MUNI and included the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at NHSMUN for the first time in its 45-year history. MUNI offers an online education service for Native youth to learn about indigenous human rights, the United Nations, and Model United Nations, and plans to host a virtual MUN: Indigenous conference. Additionally, Nathan is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

### **Peyton Barsel (18)**

*Las Vegas, NV*

The CDC estimates 45% of children nationwide experience at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), which significantly increases their risk to develop physical, mental health, and/or social issues. However, only two states in the U.S. legally require teacher training to support students. When Peyton Barsel was nine years old, her father died suddenly. She was left to grieve and process the experience primarily on her own. Peyton realized most educators lack the knowledge on how to support youth affected by trauma. She wanted to change that, so she created Trauma-informed Training for Educators, which develops and distributes trauma-informed training programs for teachers. In 2019, she drafted a bill in Nevada requiring training for teachers to support students who have experienced trauma. Peyton hopes to continue legislative advocacy and facilitate training across the nation through her nonprofit, ACE Aware.

### **Hollis Belger (15)**

*Larkspur, CA*

Every year, roughly 11,000 American children under the age of 15 are diagnosed with cancer. Of these, 2,000 die. When she was eight years old, Hollis Belger began raising money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital by juggling her soccer ball. What started as a small endeavor became "Juggling for Jude," which has raised over \$450,000 for the hospital, and a lifelong dedication to youth philanthropy. Hollis's fundraising efforts support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital's mission to provide free treatment to kids with cancer and to conduct cutting-edge cancer research. She speaks to kids, teens, and adults across the country about the devastating impact of pediatric cancer, and has inspired other young philanthropists to contribute to this and other causes. Hollis currently has a global Juggling for Jude Challenge social media campaign to fulfill her long-term goal of raising over \$1 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

### **Sonia Chajet Wides (16)**

*Brooklyn, NY*

After the 2016 presidential election, Sonia Chajet Wides was inspired to find a way for teenagers to stay educated and active in current global issues. What began as a shared Google Doc with notable organizations and phone numbers to reach legislators quickly evolved into Teens Resist, a youth-run website dedicated to making activism and politics more accessible to young people. Teens Resist publishes step-by-step guides and teaches in-person workshops to educate teens about current political issues and how to get involved. The organization addresses issues such as sexual violence, criminal justice reform, environmental justice, foreign

policy, institutional racism, and immigration. To date, Teens Resist has published 59 action lists and articles, received over 30,000 visits to its website, and recruited a staff of over 20 teens from around the country. Teens Resist is preparing for 2020 local and national elections by teaching teens to phone bank, canvass, and campaign for elected officials.

### **Isha Clarke (17)**

*Oakland, CA*

People around the world are becoming increasingly aware of the climate crisis's inequitable impact on low-income communities and communities of color. Isha Clarke first became involved in the climate justice movement when a company proposed building a coal terminal in West Oakland. She and her peers publicly protested construction of the terminal, later forming the group Youth Vs. Apocalypse. Youth Vs. Apocalypse gained recognition when videos of its young activists demanding Senator Dianne Feinstein's support of the Green New Deal went viral, leading Isha to become known as a powerful leader fighting to reverse the climate crisis through community organizing, protests, and legislative change. Youth vs. Apocalypse has brought national attention to the proposed West Oakland coal terminal, led the largest youth climate strike in the U.S., and successfully helped facilitate California Governor Gavin Newsom's moratorium on new fracking permits in 2019. As a nationally recognized writer, speaker, and presenter, Isha continues to represent the collective efforts of climate change activists across the U.S.

### **Jacob Cramer (19)**

*Pepper Pike, OH*

At the age of twelve, devastated by his grandfather's death, Jacob Cramer began volunteering at a local assisted living facility as a way to memorialize and grieve him. During these visits, he learned about the loneliness that is prevalent in senior living facilities. This motivated him to found Love for the Elderly, which works to address issues of isolation in senior facilities through letter writing campaigns, gift boxes, and intergenerational relationship building. To date, Love for the Elderly has served over 20,000 seniors and engaged 65,000 volunteers across 64 countries. They have engaged dozens of companies such as Dell, Google, and Humana in letter writing campaigns, collecting over 95,000 letters to seniors. His work has received coverage in GLAMOUR, Parade Magazine, HuffPost, and USA Today. Jacob has a strong vision for the future of Love for the Elderly, which includes creating a kindness ambassador program, launching a new digital storytelling initiative, and publishing a children's book.

### **Sophie Draluck (18)**

*Highland Park, IL*

Across the African continent, 1 in 10 girls miss school during their period due to a lack of affordable, accessible menstrual products and education. After reading this in an article in 2017, Sophie Draluck was inspired to take action. She quickly learned that stigma and period poverty, or the lack of affordable access to menstrual products and education, is a global problem impacting millions of women and girls worldwide – including girls in her own hometown. To combat this Sophie founded Cycle Forward, a nonprofit that advocates for menstrual equity and empowers women and girls in need by providing free access to menstrual products through partnerships with food pantries, shelters, and other organizations across the Chicago area, Florida, the United Kingdom, India, and Haiti. Getting tampons and pads into the hands of women and girls helps them fully participate in their communities with dignity. To date, Cycle Forward has partnered with 17 organizations to donate more than 75,000 tampons and pads to

women and teens in need. Cycle Forward has also raised awareness about period poverty, advocated for menstrual equity, and fought the stigma surrounding periods through speaking events and menstrual product drives. When schools in the Chicago area reopen, Cycle Forward will resume its high school outreach program to introduce the subject of period poverty to various service clubs, funded by a HERlead-Vital Voices grant, and will work with them to create menstrual product partnerships with local food pantries.

### **Liza Goldberg (18)**

*Clarksville, MD*

Climate change and deforestation are resulting in the devastation of global mangrove forests – threatening the lives of thousands of species and major habitat loss. Until recently, there was no global data tracking system for mangrove loss around the world. At 14 years old, Liza Goldberg identified this gap and, during an internship with NASA, created EcoMap, the first resource providing real-time information on global mangrove forest loss. EcoMap uses satellite imagery to map where mangrove ecosystems are most threatened and why, helping scientists and conservationists identify priority regions for restoration and protection. In addition to identifying mangrove loss through EcoMap, Liza trains organizations and communities around the world on how they can use this information to make science-informed policy decisions to assist conservation. Liza intends to continue this project for years to come and expand the current scope to include Southeast Asia, a region of the world that is severely impacted by mangrove loss.

### **Jonah Gottlieb (18)**

*Petaluma, CA*

Just because children under the age of 18 in the U.S. can't vote doesn't mean their voices and priority issues should be ignored. Jonah Gottlieb founded the National Children's Campaign to amplify the voices of America's children and youth, ensuring adults are voting in line with young people's interests and prioritizing children's issues. Through strikes, marches, forums, summits, and lobby-days, his team works to ensure young people's voices are heard by those in office. Jonah and the National Children's Campaign co-sponsored the White House Climate Strike with Greta Thunberg and the September 20th Washington, D.C., Climate Strike, which had over 12,000 attendees, and hosted the Schools For Climate Action Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C. The National Children's Campaign focuses on issues related to health, education, racial justice, the environment, child welfare, and more. The organization is cultivating the next generation of lobbyists through its online bill writing programs and lobbying campaigns. Jonah is also the co-host of Our Future Now!, the official National Children's Campaign podcast.

### **Jamie Margolin (18)**

*Seattle, WA*

How we address the climate change crisis today will largely determine what kind of world our young people will inherit. After the U.S. announced its intention to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement, Jamie Margolin launched Zero Hour, an international youth-led climate action organization. With the mission of centering the voices of diverse youth in the conversation around climate and environmental justice, Zero Hour organizes marches, rallies, climate strikes, mobilizations, lobby days, speaking tours, educational programming, social media campaigns, and summits to bring urgency and awareness to the climate crisis. Zero Hour organized the very first Youth Climate March in Washington, D.C., and 25 other cities around the world, created the Youth Climate Lobby Day, and co-created the first Youth Climate Summit in Miami in the

summer of 2019. Jamie has become an instrumental voice in the youth-led climate change movement and is sharing what she's learned along the way in her book, *Youth to Power: Your Voice and How to Use it*.

### **Zachary Patterson (16)**

*San Diego, CA*

As a student in the San Diego School District, Zachary Patterson witnessed a disconnect between students, teachers, and the administration. Zachary at times felt powerless to voice his opinions, as decisions were made that did not represent the desires or needs of students. Noticing a lack of student-representation in a system where students are the primary stakeholders, he sought to rectify this issue by creating a Student Advisory Board, which would connect students directly to district decisions, and placing a student on the school district's Board of Education. After engaging with thousands of students, Zachary was elected as the first student to ever serve on the San Diego Board of Education. In his role, Zachary leads the Student Advisory Board, which seeks to represent the needs of over 100,000 students of various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Zachary is a founder of the California Student Board Member Association which works to expand the same ideals of student-representation in San Diego Unified to districts across California. Zachary hopes that his work on the district, statewide, and national levels will lead to transforming the role of students in their education system.

### **Noah Rubin (17)**

*Boca Raton, FL*

Computer programming is the key that can unlock the doors of opportunity for careers in technology. Noah Rubin began learning to code at a young age and soon discovered how expensive and inaccessible coding programs were for underserved children. He sought to bridge that divide by creating canCode, a nonprofit organization that hosts teen-led workshops in computer programming for children who have reduced access to high-quality extracurricular activities. canCode includes a peer mentorship component that offers teenagers valuable volunteer experience as coding teachers and mentors to elementary-aged children. Partnering with local community centers and after-school programs, canCode has now served over 300 students, enlisted and trained 17 volunteer teachers, and recently expanded to ten sites. Noah has successfully transitioned to teaching online workshops due to COVID-19, and has used this as an opportunity to expand his reach and impact to children through new partnerships.

### **Olivia Seltzer (15)**

*Santa Barbara, CA*

After the 2016 presidential election, Olivia Seltzer noticed many of her peers were deeply concerned about the future but didn't have a reliable and relatable source of news to stay up to date on issues impacting their lives. To address this disconnect, Olivia launched the Cramm – a news outlet that is written by and for young people. The Cramm summarizes important stories and makes information accessible to teens through email, text, Instagram stories and videos, and podcasts. Through the Cramm, Olivia works with nearly 500 teen ambassadors around the world and publishes content in seven different languages. The Cramm reaches audiences in over 100 countries and has 2.5 million monthly newsletter subscribers and nearly 8,000 Instagram followers. Olivia has been featured in Teen Vogue, NPR, Forbes, and The Economist and on the TODAY show.

