

THE SAMUEL HUNTINGTON PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

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OUR WINNERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND THE BIG TIME!

Dear Friends of the Sam Huntington Award,

We are always very proud of the achievements of our winners and take great delight in keeping up with them and hearing how their projects are working out, and what they are each doing in their lives. In this edition you will read an article by **Kent Koth**, one of our earliest winners. Kent graduated from Grinnell (1990) and worked to establish the "Alternative Spring Break" for college students to do public service rather than sit at home or simply vacation somewhere nice. The program has been so successful that Kent has continued to work on this project in different locations at different colleges.

Speaking of success, one of our past winners, **Arielle Tolman**, (Wesleyan '11) recently made the national news! Arielle's project, *Shining Hope*, to train health care workers from among the women of Kibera, a desperately poor slum in Nairobi, Kenya, to decrease maternal mortality, was featured on NBC's *Nightly News with Brian Williams!* It turns out that **Chelsea Clinton** had visited the project

and reported back for NBC on the success of the work being done by *Shining Hope*. At Christmas time, **Nicholas Kristoff**, op-ed writer for *The New York Times*, put *Shining Hope* on his list of charities making a difference and worthy of support. Arielle is waiting to hear about her applications to law schools and we certainly wish her well.

Mark Arnoldy, (University of Colorado, '10) who established a health care clinic in a remote area of western Nepal, is writing another success story. People in that part of the world often have to walk, or be carried, for several days to have any access to medical care. *Nyaya*, which means 'justice in action', is the clinic's name and the name of his organization. *Nyaya* recently opened a new surgical wing and none other than world-famous **Dr. Paul Farmer**, founder of *Partners in Health*, traveled there with Mark to open the wing, conduct clinical rounds, and inspect the work being done. *Nyaya* continues to grow and provide quality health care for some of the world's poorest people. As Dr. Farmer wrote



Jennifer Huntington
Chair

after his visit, "Acknowledging the injustice that takes so many lives so early is not enough. Linking knowledge to reparative action is what we're all called to do, together!" Congratulations Mark both for your work at *Nyaya*, and for this partnership!

Closer to home, **Jason Lynch** (Stonehill College '12), started the *Champions Project*, in Brockton, MA. He works with students in a gym in that city, providing both a safe place to do homework, get tutoring, prepare for a GED, and work on their physical fitness. Some of these students have had encounters with the law, and Jason recently told me a moving story about one of them, who had been shot twice

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Updates From 2012 Winners

Agriculture in Sierra Leone and Liberia



After graduating from Duke University, **Michael Bernert** headed to Sierra Leone and Liberia to provide risk capital and expertise to local farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs, through WAVA, LLC, which he created to make loans and investments. He arrived in Liberia on May 10, and has since made an equity investment of \$90,000, loaned another \$45,000, built over three acres of facilities, storehouses, and workshops, and supported employment for 167 people in Sierra Leone producing 144,500 pounds of food. WAVA is training the farmers, introducing new concepts and seed, and making a long term commitment to the community, signing a 50 year lease for 2000 acres of farmland along the Moa River.

Brighter Dawns in Bangladesh

Tasmih Khan's project focuses on sanitation and drinking water in Bangladesh. Her organization, Brighter Dawns, aims to build tube wells and latrines, and to provide sanitation kits and training for the community. During 2012, Brighter Dawns provided 500 sanitation kits, and held seminars for 108 women, 112 men, and 116 children to discuss sanitation techniques. Building wells and latrines has been delayed by the need to work through local procedures and coordination with governmental agencies, but work on the planning, design, and permitting of the projects continues. During the past year, Brighter Dawns has continued to grow and now includes five college chapters, including Wesleyan University where Tasmih graduated and started Brighter Dawns.



The Champions Project



Jason Lynch's Champions Project is located in Brockton, Massachusetts, the next town over from Stonehill College, where he graduated. Brockton is the home of Rocky Marciano and Marvin Hagler, and Jason organized his project on the theme of Champions to improve fitness and academic achievement for the youth at risk in the community. Fifteen young men and women participated in the program's first twelve week session (eight boys and seven girls), and he expects to run two more, including a summer program. He has engaged ten academic tutors to assist with homework, teach for high school equivalency tests, and help with SAT preparation. Fridays and Saturdays are spent in the gym improving fitness, and running around the neighborhood. As the result of the program, one older student is nearly ready for his high school equivalency test, the SAT scores for another have improved significantly, and parents are thanking Jason for the improved homework and fitness of their children. Jason is hoping to expand the program across Massachusetts and the United States.

Reflections from a Prior Award Winner

Kent Koth Samuel Huntington Award Winner, 1990

Late in the fall semester of my senior year at Grinnell College I sent out a campus announcement inviting my peers to come back a week early from winter break, to live and serve in a low-income community in Des Moines, Iowa. Thinking that two or three students would have an interest, I was stunned to see 30 students join me. In mid-January of 1990 we gathered for a one-week "alternative break" service trip. Each day we worked at homeless shelters, schools, and meal programs and each night we met as a group to learn from community leaders and reflect on our experiences. We slept on the floor of a church and cooked our meals as a community. By the end of the week many of us had experienced a significant sense of transformation. For me, it was a week that would inspire me for a lifetime.

By leading the alternative break trip, I realized that I'd found an idea worth pursuing. So in March of 1990 when I

saw the announcement for the Huntington Public Service Award, I applied with the goal of trying to spread the "alternative break" concept to other colleges and universities. With my long hair, disheveled sweater and VERY large round glasses I entered my interview excited to share my ideas and learn from the committee. Upon receiving the award I set off for Portland, Oregon to start the Alternative Break Coalition.

Based out of an AME Church, we engaged dozens of students from multiple Oregon colleges and universities in experiences such as serving as shelter hosts, weatherizing homes, leading games for children and engaging community leaders in discussions. At the end of each week I encouraged the participants to go back to their campuses and start their own alternative break programs. In essence, I was trying to plant an idea and then get out of the way.

Today, the actual Alternative Break Coalition no longer exists but alternative breaks are now a consistent feature on hundreds of campuses

throughout the United States. By no means would I claim credit for all of this -- I think of the spread of alternative breaks in the late 1980s and early 1990s, like the spread of the Occupy Movement today, was a movement of many without one central leader.

After leaving the Alternative Break Coalition I moved to California and directed a Silicon Valley based non-profit that mobilizes k-12 children from diverse backgrounds to serve together in their communities. I also worked at the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University where one of my duties included advising the "alternative spring break" student group. Today, I direct community engagement activities at Seattle University and lead a comprehensive effort to connect the university with a local neighborhood. Twenty-three years later my hair is much shorter, my attire a little more crisp and my glasses much smaller, but I am still drawing upon the passion and inspiration of those days of sleeping on floors and eating communally with friends.



The Samuel Huntington Award gave me a chance to explore an idea and develop my leadership skills. Yet it also provided a deep spiritual insight. In response to the tragic loss of her husband, Jennifer Huntington, joined by all of you, have given great life to dozens of young people and the thousands of people they've impacted. To Jennifer, please know that you are one of my heroines. And to all those who support the award -- thank you!

Kent Koth

Dance Movement Expression Class for Immigrant Students

Dian Liu's project focuses on immigrant students in New York City, who have experienced an interruption in their formal education. Dian's idea is to use creative dance to help the students socialize with others, improve their communication skills, and manage the stress associated with moving to a new environment. She has moved forward to establish her organization, called "Dance United," assemble a team of accomplished instructors, create partnerships with two other organizations (the University at East Village and Go Project) and design her curriculum. She is now conducting classes and intends to hold a performance at the conclusion of the program. She is also working on a summer program for thirty to forty students. Dian is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College.



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Our Winners make a Difference and the Big Time! *continued*

and seen a friend die from bullet wounds. This young man had met up with members of his old gang, and then made a poor choice to go with them to a convenience store where one member pulled a gun. The police arrived, but released Jason's student. Jason asked the student to think about the possible consequences of this incident including his own death. Together they 'envisaged' his funeral: who would be there, what would they be feeling, who would say what about him etc. They wrote all this down and the student tacked it up in his room at home. Weeks later, the student reported to Jason that he almost got into a bad

fight at school, but backed off when he thought about that funeral document. Making a difference, one life at a time, thank you Jason!

Tasmihah Kahn (Wesleyan '12) founded *Brighter Dawns*, a student led initiative, that works to bring preventative health solutions to slums in Bangladesh. Currently, *Brighter Dawns* is focusing on Khulna, one of the poorest and most densely populated slums in that impoverished country. With a slum density of 132,988 people per square kilometer, residents of Khulna average 10-12 households using a single, unsafe water source and waterborne

diseases are rampant. *Brighter Dawns* repairs broken wells and latrines, and engages the local community in hygiene education that will reduce exposure to disease and save lives. *Brighter Dawns* has now established chapters in several US colleges and universities including: Harvard, Trinity College, and the University of Illinois. It comes as no surprise that last year Tasmihah was invited to speak at **The White House**, where she was recognized as a "Social Innovator for Change". Tasmihah was also recently named among a group of three "2013 Inspiring Muslim Women" by the *Muslim Women's Alliance*. Congratulations

Tasmihah!

Every one of these success stories is only part of the much larger picture of the many successes achieved by the winners of the Samuel Huntington Public Service Award. We are very proud of them all. Thanks to each and every one of you, our generous donors, we can continue this wonderful legacy of success, which has now been ongoing since 1989! Thank you all.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Huntington

A Thousand Thanks to the Woman Behind the Scenes!



Amy Stacy, whom many of you know only as a name on donation envelopes, or an email address, or as the recipient of countless applications, truly deserves to be recognized for her integrity, her organizational skills, her hard work, her patience and her sense of humor. Many thanks Amy! Amy, who worked for New England Electric (now National Grid), has been the woman behind the scenes since 1998. Not only does Amy work for the Samuel Huntington Fund *pro bono* so that every dime of your donations goes directly to the Samuel Huntington Fund's winners, she does it with rare grace, intelligence and always with a smile! Starting in late December and working for six weeks, Amy collects all the paperwork for all the applications. This year alone there were over 400 pieces of paper! Proposals, resumes, letters of recommendation, transcripts, all must be sorted and collated before being sent out to the first readers. Amy sends out reminders to each applicant whose file is not complete, and eventually sends out letters following the selections of our semi-finalists. Some of this is done electronically, but each must be printed and filed. In addition, Amy schedules the finalist interviews, keeps the minutes, answers questions about our Tax ID #, and sets up the conference calls. Amy is married with two children, one a freshman in college, and the other a 7th grader. In effect, she has three jobs: home and family, National Grid, and our Fund. Amy, we owe you a huge bouquet of thanks for everything you do to help the fund keep running so smoothly. We appreciate it all. Thank you from us all: applicants, winners, donors and the committee! You are the best!

Thank you to our Supporters!

The Samuel Huntington Fund was established in 1989, and has now granted 58 Public Service Awards to graduating college seniors. Since November 1, 2012, we have received contributions from more than 50 individuals, and we thank each of them sincerely. Each of them, along with any additional supporters, will be acknowledged in our next newsletter. Please consider making a tax deductible donation to the Samuel Huntington Fund. For your convenience, a pre-addressed envelope is enclosed with this newsletter. You can also make a contribution at any time by sending a check to: The Samuel Huntington Fund, c/o Ms. Amy Stacy, National Grid, 40 Sylvan Road, Waltham, MA 02451.