

# THE SAMUEL HUNTINGTON PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

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## Paying it Forward

### Dear Friends of the Sam Huntington Award,

Every year as we read the applications, we are impressed over and over again by the hopes, the courage and the dedication to work with and for others that all these young people show. We know that these project ideas are often visions. We also know that many times those visions have become sustainable realities supported by every one of our donors to the Samuel Huntington Award. To quote three of our past winners: Elizabeth Sholtys (2007) "I really do appreciate the support that I received in the form of the SH Award. It was difficult, as a college student with a vision, to be taken seriously by the outside world, and I feel very fortunate that the committee believed in me at that pivotal point." Onyi Offor (2005) "I cannot thank you enough for the influence the Huntington Award had on my life. You sowed a seed that I believe has borne much fruit." Michael Bernert (2012) "The Samuel Huntington

Award is an incredible gift of generosity and mentorship that enables so much good."

I have said before that staying connected with many of our winners is one of the great joys of my life, and a wonderful way of remembering Sam. Many of our past winners, most recently David Milner (1990) and Vivek Murthy (1997), have made very generous financial donations to the Fund, and have described their gifts as "paying it forward." We are very grateful for their donations.

I want to acknowledge other winners' ways of 'paying it forward'. Now that we have 62 past winners, I love helping to make connections between and among them. Young men and women going off to college as first generation hopefuls – through Jeannie Lang Rosenthal's Let's Get Ready program (2000), can now access low cost used furniture, books and more, through Alex Freid's (2013) program PLAN, or Trash to Treasure,



**Jennifer Huntington**  
**Chair**

that is now operating on over 40 campuses nationwide. Kent Koth (1990) who started the Alternative Spring Break program is in touch with Angela Lee Duckworth (1992) who initiated Summerbridge Cambridge. Both of them are now working in academia overseeing service programs and researching what it takes to be successful in life.

The old adage that great oaks grow from little acorns is certainly true of the Samuel Huntington Award winners and their projects. Facing long odds, skepticism, small salaries, and often extremely difficult living conditions, many of them have turned this \$15,000 award for their projects into successful, sustainable ventures that have

*Continued on page 3*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Updates from 2014 Winners	2
Letter From a Prior Award Winner	3
Then and Now	4
Thank You to Our Support- ers	4

# Updates From 2014 Award Winners

Last Spring, the Committee granted Samuel Huntington Public Service Awards to three outstanding candidates--Alexander Epstein, Lonnie Hackett, and Michael Long. Since that time, the winners have been hard at work. We are happy to report on their progress:

## Urban Gardens in Philadelphia



After **Alex Epstein** graduated from Temple he wanted to carry on an organization that he and his colleagues created with a diverse team of local residents and young entrepreneurs. The idea, called "Urban Creators," was to transform some of Philadelphia's blighted landscapes through urban gardening. The goal was to use the gardens to train inner-city youth, and sell the produce to center city restaurants. The program has gone beyond initial expectations. Alex reports that last summer he hosted ten summer interns, and cultivated the "most produce that we have ever had." They celebrated the successful harvest with a "Hood Stock" music festival that drew over 1,500 people to the farm "working, dancing, eating, and celebrating." The organization was featured in Philadelphia's Grid Magazine, in which Alex stressed the need for a team to make the project a success. Alex is growing more than vegetables.

## "Healthy Students" in Lusaka, Zambia

**Lonnie Hackett's** idea was to train two teachers from each of the low income community schools in the N'gombe district of Lusaka to teach health care and establish a health care referral system for the students. He headed to Zambia after graduation from Bowdoin and has achieved remarkable success. He has hired employees, developed curricula for training teachers, and recruited every one of the 56 N'gombe community schools with over 11,000 at-risk youth to the program. Healthy Students has provided medical screenings to more than 3500 children and provided them with basic health care. Local partners are urging expansion to other districts and even nationally. But Lonnie's goal is to "refine a replicable model" and expand the program to any developing country where there are children attending school without adequate health screening. After this year's performance, we have no doubt that he will achieve his goal.



## "SailFuture": Mentoring At-Risk Juvenile Offenders



**Michael Long**, graduate of New College of Florida and the Florida juvenile justice system, proposed to connect youth exiting the juvenile justice system with inexperienced college students by pairing them and teaching them to sail. He has modified his program a bit to focus on youth who are still incarcerated. Specifically, he has worked with Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice to implement a new diversion program. Rather than being detained, the offenders would be provided a six month journey through the Caribbean, during which they will learn to sail, engage in public service on the islands, earn their GEDs, and receive regular counselling. Michael has made a formal proposal to the state, whose approval and formal support is required.

# Letter From a Prior Award Winner

My name is Jason Lynch and I'm a proud 2012 winner of the Samuel Huntington Public Service Award. Now that three years have quickly passed by, I've begun to reflect on the Award's long-term impact on my life.

First, it allowed me to create the Champions Project, a boxing/tutoring program for disadvantaged youth in Brockton, Massachusetts. Our team created some very worthwhile outcomes and built many deep relationships along the way. A highlight for me was being in the wedding ceremony of a former program participant. He's become a close friend and I'm so proud to see how far he's come after a long battle with drug addiction. After 18 great months of programming, I seized a unique opportunity and chose to put the program on hold to hone my skills in fundraising and program management at the Alzheimer's Association. Currently, I'm building the organization's newly-launched, second signature event, The Longest Day. These entrepreneurial experiences helped me earn a full scholarship to Brandeis University, where I'm also pursuing my MBA in Nonprofit Management. I fully intend to re-launch some version of the Champions Project once my schooling is complete. Clearly, the Award's impact extended much further than I initially expected, and, in three short years, its effect on my life has already been profound.

At a more basic level, though, I'd argue that the biggest benefit awarded to winners is confidence.

There's a social psychologist from Harvard named Amy Cuddy who's researched how "power posing," or standing in a posture of confidence, can positively impact life outcomes. Her TED Talk is among the most viewed of all time with just under 25 million views. Cuddy argues that power posing, especially when you feel as if you're in over your head, can directly impact your chances for success. Our bodies change our minds. Our minds change our behavior. And our behavior changes our outcomes. For me, knowing I'm a Sam Huntington winner always elicits an automatic power pose.

Several times in the past three years, I've wondered whether or not I'd bitten off more than I could chew. But I remind myself that I'm in the same ranks as accomplished former winners like Angela Duckworth, Vivek Murthy, and Mark Arnoldy: recipient of the MacArthur Genius Award; current U.S. Surgeon General; and "Forbes 30 Under 30" entrepreneur, respectively. Being in such company makes me stand up a little taller, strike a power pose, and know that I'll accomplish great things despite the challenges and setbacks along the way.

Effecting social change is a hard job, especially among vulnerable populations. I imagine all former winners have had private moments of doubt and uncertainty. But there is immeasurable value in knowing that we're Sam Huntington winners. Because of what the Award represents, we've developed the confidence to step up as the next wave of leaders in the social sector.

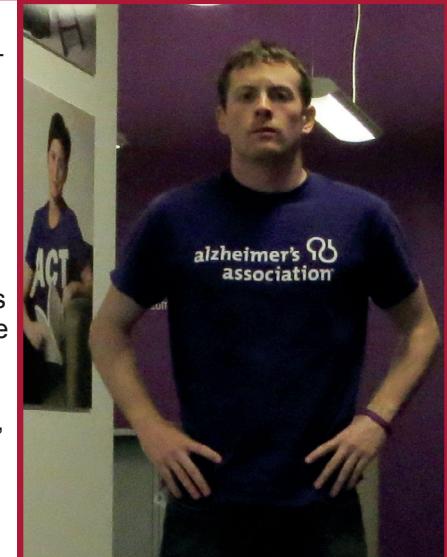
Today, many of us have gone much further than we might have imagined because the Sam Huntington committee believed in us. It's also because of the contagious optimism of Jennifer Huntington and the enduring legacy of her great husband Sam.

To Jennifer and the committee: on behalf of all former winners, please know how much we appreciate your support. By granting each of us this Award and the confidence that comes with it, you acknowledged that we would succeed before we fully knew it ourselves. And that has made such a difference.

## Greetings from the Chair, continued

impacted education, health, and the environment for many thousands of people here in the USA, and around the world. They are all 'paying it forward' in different ways. Their work would certainly make Sam proud, and I feel sure he would smile with approval!

Your kind and generous donations continue to allow us to plant the acorns that we hope will grow into wonderful oak trees. Without your help, we would not be able to take these visions seriously, or let these wonderful young people know that we believe in them,



**Thank you all.**

*Jennifer Huntington*

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## Then and Now



As noted in her letter, Jenny Huntington enjoys staying in touch with past award winners. The picture on the left shows Jenny with Vivek Murthy in the Spring of 1997 when he won the Samuel Huntington Public Service Award. The Picture on the right shows Jenny and Vivek in the Spring of 2015 when Vivek was being sworn in as the 19th U. S. Surgeon General.



## Thank you to our Supporters!

The Samuel Huntington Fund was established in 1989, and has now granted 64 Public Service Awards. None of what has been accomplished through these awards would have been possible without the generous contributions of our supporters. We are sincerely grateful to the individuals listed below that have made a contribution since our last Newsletter was published last Fall. 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. Thank you for your consideration!

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