

## 42 Youth-Led Projects Earn Distinguished National Riley's Way Foundation Fellowship

***Fellowship Provides Recipients with Funding, Leadership Development Training and Community***

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Note: Photos or interviews with winners available upon request.*

Contact: Christine O'Connell, 917-627-5975 or [coconnell@rileysandler.org](mailto:coconnell@rileysandler.org)

**New York, NY, May 6, 2024**—Riley's Way Foundation just announced its 2024 winners: 42 outstanding young people (ages 13-23) from across the country whose innovative ideas and actions have granted them entrance into a dynamic leadership fellowship – and up to \$5,000 each for their commitment to leading with kindness, empathy, and inclusivity.

"The Call for Kindness inspires and draws in exceptionally gifted young leaders who are driven by a deep passion to make the world a better place," expressed Ian Sandler, Co-Founder and Board Chair of Riley's Way. "These remarkable young leaders hold the key to tackling the world's most pressing issues, and we believe that by investing in them, we can help them turn their ideas into reality. Whether they are just beginning to explore their ideas or have advanced plans, we strive to support and encourage them to imagine a better future and work tirelessly toward it."

Riley's Way Foundation supports and invests in the next generation of kind leaders. Its annual Call For Kindness fellowship provides funding and leadership development training to youth-led projects that are rooted in kindness and strengthening communities. Winners receive up to a \$5,000 grant to grow their organization and join a peer community of fellow changemakers to strengthen their leadership skills. Forty winning social impact projects were chosen from hundreds of applications and came from 36 states. In addition to the general category, Riley's Way selected 10 inspiring projects focusing on education equity, animal rights, interfaith connections, and dance & the arts.

"The 2024 Call For Kindness winners reflect critical issues top of mind for young people today," shared Dr. Christine O'Connell, Executive Director of Riley's Way. "They have answered the call to make a difference in their communities, adding to a national movement for kindness."

### **Riley's Way Foundation 2024 Call For Kindness Winners**

**Ryland Adzich (she/her), 18 | Literacy Spaces In Laundromats | Cupertino, California**  
Creates small libraries in laundromats to make books more accessible to low-income families.

**Alexa Muchnick (she/her), 17 | Rose Musical Theater | Monterey, California**  
A free 2-week musical theater camp for children who do not have access to the arts.

**Gene Yoon (he/him), 16 | Pro & Con | Columbus, Georgia**

Leading Today for a Kinder Tomorrow.



Works with middle schoolers at two different Title 1 schools to strengthen communication skills by providing free speech and debate lessons.

**Addison Lowry (she/her), 16; Viet Pham (he/him), 16; and Ellie Moses (any/all), 16 | 13 Firsts Podcast | Louisville, Kentucky**

A social and educational justice podcast that amplify's student voices and is dedicated to informing youth and igniting change.

**Anna Siegel (she/her), 17 and team | Maine Youth Political Portal | Portland, Maine**

A dynamic website and civic innovation toolbox to encourage youth to get involved in politics and run for office in Maine.

**Erek Mirque (he/him), 19 and team | Friends of Guatemala Call for Kindness Application | Ann Arbor, Michigan**

Provides virtual tutoring and monetary support for Indigenous students in Guatemalan schools.

**Saeed Tamboli (he/him), 17 and Ammar Malik (he/him), 16 | The Speaking Solution | Plainsboro, New Jersey**

Provides free public speaking tutoring to underserved communities.

**Edlyn Awedoba (she/her), 17 and team | Youth-Led Support | Laurelton, New York**

Provides tutoring and mentorship to over 150 students from underrepresented backgrounds, and training and support to tutors to bolster college applications.

**Grace Chenxin Liu (she/her), 16 | Research to Empower (ReTE) | Syosset, New York**

Supports and empowers aspiring researchers to make research accessible to all, regardless of age, gender, race, or financial background.

**Rohan Satija (he/him), 16 and Anya Satija (she/her), 14 | Let's Learn Foundation | Cedar Park, Texas**

A program that finds books with central BIPOC characters and donates them to underfunded schools with at least 60% minority enrollment.

**Jasmin Rossi (she/her), 16 | Tutu & Tulle | Miami, Florida**

Provides dance schools with the funds they need to develop and expand their scholarship programs for ballet dancers from low-income backgrounds through bracelet-making.

**Ashley Guo (she/her), 16 and Kelly Halliburton (she/her), 17 | Exceeding Passions | Brea, California**

Brings performing arts opportunities to people who may not have access to them, especially youth and seniors.

**Ariela Robinson (she/her), 16 | Reducing Animal Stress | Los Angeles, California**

Supports animal shelters and rescues, and educates people about the importance of pet enrichment.

**Zoe Hewitt (she/her), 15 | The Kennel Kindness Project | Asheville, NC**

A six-week program where rising 4th and 7th graders team up to make treats, toys, blankets, and adoption pamphlets for the dogs in the shelter.

**Cash Daniels (he/him), 14 | Conservation Kid Fishing Line Recycling Program | Chattanooga, Tennessee**

Place monofilament bins to collect fishing line, which is then recycled into fish habitats to improve the health of our rivers while decreasing the chance of wildlife entanglement.

**Sanja Jing (she/her), 16 and team | Global Visioneers | Chula Vista, California**

Provides multiple language and cultural exchange programs, such as international pen pals, to foster connectivity, understanding, and inclusivity in youth around the world.

**Pravneet Chadha (he/him), 16 and Hurshneet Chadha (he/him), 16 | Project Smile AZ | Phoenix, Arizona**

Inspires young people to give back and spread smiles through simple doable acts of kindness by providing opportunities for children with disabilities, neurodivergent individuals, foster kids, and refugees to get involved with in community service projects.

**Aani Nagaiah (she/her), 17 and Gage Samaddar (he/him), 18 | Our Ode To You | Phoenix, Arizona**

A volunteer-based program to connect local youth with older adults through artistic opportunities like art classes and jam sessions.

**Bri Blair (she/her), 15 | HerGov | Phoenix, Arizona & Goodyear, Arizona**

A nonpartisan online magazine and youth group to get more teen girls engaged in local politics, and spark more interest in teen girls for going into public policy and politics later in life.

**Manasi Gajjalapurna (she/her), 18 and Sualeha Irshad (she/her), 19 | The Boss Ladies Podcast | San Jose, California**

A podcast and multi-media platform that interviews female creatives, entrepreneurs, and technologists, and shares powerful insights with hundreds of girls across 32+ countries.

**Madeline Lee (she/her), 16 and Grace Coffee (she/her), 17 | Rainbow Voices | Redwood City, California**

Fosters a safe space for young LGBTQ+ and BIPOC teens to share art, music, and writing through art and writing workshops, crafting nights, panels by local artists and authors, and a mentorship program.

**Aaron Yeo (he/him), 23 | Impact Finance Program | Los Angeles, California**

Educates college students about career paths in impact investing and sustainable finance and connects them with opportunities and resources.

**Madison Lee (she/her), 17; Lauren Nesbitt (she/her), 17 years old; and Victoria Holdgreve-Resendez (she/her), 17 | Young Artists 4 Equity | Denver, Colorado**

Dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion in the arts for underprivileged youth by collaborating with arts high schools and elementary schools across the U.S. and providing arts education to thousands of children free of cost.

**Ranen Miao (he/him), 23 | OutVote | Arizona & Pennsylvania**

Committed to building a culture of civic engagement in the LGBTQIA+ community to build electoral power, protect our community, and elect leaders who represent the diversity of our nation.

**Brody Sundheim (he/him), 16 | Cameras for Kindness | Miami, Florida**

A photography education initiative that will teach teens with cognitive and physical disabilities how to use cameras to capture the world around them.

**Denver Humphrey (she/her), 15 and Dylan Humphrey (he/him), 19 | Do-Ology | Oviedo, Florida**

Provides workshops, community exchange, and other opportunities to marginalized youth to inspire their artistic passions through opportunities to work with Grammy-nominated producers or award-winning filmmakers.

**Jay'Shun Matthews (he/him), 17 and team | Black Youth Empowerment Network | Warner Robins, Georgia**

Provides resources, support, and opportunities to help Black youth thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

**Mollie Guba (she/her), 21, Sareena Naganand (she/her), 18 and team | Institute for Youth in Policy Education Department | Evanston, Illinois**

Provides non-partisan curriculum and workshops created by youth, for youth to foster discourse and understanding for the next generation of young voters, making sure that they are engaged and informed.

**Sohair Holman (she/her), 20 | Project Safe and Sound | Ann Arbor, Michigan**

Repairs infrastructure, addresses mold and insect infestations, and provides heating, roofing, and environmentally-friendly home appliances to houses in Detroit.

**Felicien Sangwa (he/him), 23 | Sangwa's technical resources | Ann Arbor, Michigan**

Empowers immigrant and refugee youth with the resources they need for higher education.

**Sam Hiner (he/him), 20 and team | Young People's Alliance Fellows Program | Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

A fellowship that mentors young people who are starting non-profits and other civics-related projects to get more kind, empathetic young people involved in politics.

**Sophia Gandhi (they/them), 17; Clara Schulz, 18 and Alicia Gallegos, 18 | New Jersey GSA Coalition - Campaign 4 Gender Inclusivity | Westfield, New Jersey**

Brings together LGBTQIA+ youth across New Jersey through events, such as LGBTQIA+ prom, and other programs, so that the youth can feel less isolated because of their identity.

**Mila Huang (she/her), 16 and team | Climbing for Community | Montclair, New Jersey**

Provides underserved youth the opportunity to connect with a supportive community through rock climbing through free beginner climbing classes.

**Francesca Lapointe (she/her), 17 and team | End Period Poverty | Saint Albans, New York**

Educates youth about period poverty and creates inclusive period equity workshops; provides menstruation products to schools and local women's shelters to increase accessibility and decrease stigma.

**Maya Puterman (she/her), 17 and team | Fresh Opportunities: Students against hunger | New York City, New York**

Educates and provides students with the resources to take action against food waste in their schools or institutions and connects them with a local community fridge, pantry, or shelters.

**Emily Roman (she/her), 19 and team | Feeding Healthy Minds | Yonkers, New York**  
Addresses food insecurity within the Black and Brown Long Island City/Queensbridge community by cultivating community leadership and offering fresh produce and healthy activities.

**Shrujana Karthick Iyer (she/her), 16 | Rasikas Rise | New York City, NY; NY State; NJ State**

Unites rasikas, a Carnatic music term for a music lover, to rise in advocacy for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) in Carnatic Music and Bharatanatyam.

**Kimberly Cortes-Martinez (she/they), 18 and team | Don't Oppress Youth Success | Gresham, Oregon**

Advocates for and works toward initiating restorative justice practices in the Gresham-Barlow School District and developing a mentorship program between BIPOC middle school and high school students.

**Ariyana Hashemi (she/her), 17 | Generation Union | Reston, Virginia**

A non-profit organization dedicated to uplifting elderly mental wellness through youth volunteering and social events.

**Brian Zhou (he/they), 17 and team | The SPRING Group | Herndon, Virginia**

Gives youth a voice in local, state, and national spaces and democratizes access to policy, law, and politics through policy analysis, advocacy, and translation.

**Ananya Diddee (she/her), 16 | Replant | Redmond, Washington**

Empowers refugees globally and locally through language support programs, distributing food, helping refugee children enter STEM fields, building community, and providing women with menstrual cups and education about cervical cancer prevention.

**Ivy Liu (she/her), 15 and team | The Teen Coalition 4 Climate | Seattle, Washington**

Uplifts youth climate voices on the political and global stage through the first youth-led climate awareness magazine, *YOUzine*, featuring art and writing, and more, and a "How To Start Your Climate Activism Journey" podcast.

### **2024 Continuation Grant Winners**

**Shrusti Amula (she/her), 17, and team, Can We Do Something About Food Waste?, Clarksburg, Maryland (2023 Fellows)**

This project diverts food waste from incinerators or landfills to compost facilities and rescues food from schools, restaurants, and grocery stores for community members facing food insecurity.

**Khloe Thompson (18) PeachTree Pad – San Diego, CA (2020 Fellow)**

*Provides free eco-friendly, sustainable feminine pads for people in Ghana.*

**Leydi Borges (she/her), 17, and Alex Interian (he/him), 16, Sci+Pi4All, Hialeah, Florida (2023 Fellows)**

This is a virtual initiative that provides free science and math resources to children in grades 1-3 to help youth see the possibilities of STEM.

**Jessie Baxter (she/her), 17, and Holly Milsom (she/her), 16, Ta-Ta For Now, Palm Beach, Florida (2023 Fellows)** The organization believes that sports should be an equalizer, providing

girls of all socioeconomic backgrounds with supportive undergarments so they feel comfortable and prepared to compete.

**Laasya Acharya (she/her), 16, The Ceres Organization, Mason, Ohio (2023 Fellow)** The organization encourages the world to solve issues with science and create awareness about food insecurity through Ceres research, advocacy, and STEM education.

**Neal Chopra (he/him), 18 (and team), Codology, Redwood City, California (2023 Fellow)** Codology offers free hands-on computer science courses, research programs, and resources that help guide students along their journey to becoming tech industry leaders.

**Arabella Tan, 16, (and team), WikiVision, Honolulu, Hawaii (2023 Fellows)** They address the need for free cataract surgery among underserved patients who lack access to affordable healthcare.

**Chase Hartman (he/him), 18, and Zach Hartman (he/him), 14, Eco Brothers, Inc., Tampa, Florida (2023 Fellows)** Eco Brothers, Inc. promotes community service and gets new books into the hands of children in need.

**Gaayathri Binoj (she/her), 18, Queens On The Board, Chesterfield, Missouri (2023 Fellow)** The program works to increase female participation in chess with a free monthly series of chess sessions for female youth in Missouri, including a chess tournament.

**Benjamin Barkoff (he/him), 19, Whiskey Bravo, New York City, New York (2023 Fellow)** Youth learn about the US military through hands-on service projects and lessons while also improving the lives of service men and women and their families.

**Agha Haider (21) St. Louis, MO: The Education Collaborative (2020 Fellow)** The Next Young Leaders Program and the Acting Program inspires young people to continue pursuing the arts by connecting professional actors to our partner Title 1 schools, impacting students in the arts across the nation including inner-city NYC and LA schools along with schools in rural Montana and New Mexico.

**Aarya, 19 (and team), Imagine, Innovate, Inspire (I3) Competition, Connecticut (2022 Fellows)** The I3 Competition is a technological- and entrepreneurial-based competition that partners students in high school with small businesses owned by people of color who have difficulty accessing capital and resources. Using design-thinking skills, the students create a piece of digital infrastructure (mobile app, website, or social media campaign) for the businesses over a two-month working period.

**CryOut Curbs Cravings — Jackson, McComb, Hattiesburg, Magnolia, & Pearl, MS Jaidon Horton (21) & group (2021 Fellow)** *Provide nutritious meals and snacks for school-aged children in the Mississippi area with packaging that contains information to raise awareness about the issue of hunger.*

**Austin Picinich (he/him), 19, Save Our Salmon “SOS” Through Art, Seattle, Washington (2023 Fellow)** “SOS” creates large painted murals along Seattle-area streams to encourage others to become better stewards of local streams and make communities more vibrant.

**Christopher Fuentes (he/him), 14, and Jazlyn Fuentes, 17, Feel Our Meals, Staten Island, New York (2023 Fellows)** This program provides families who do not have access to basic necessities a chance to experience warmth, love, and cultural heritage through food.

**Mark Leschinsky (he/him), 18, Student World Impact Film Festival, Mahwah, NJ (2023 Fellow)** The Festival elevates the voices of young storytellers from historically marginalized races, backgrounds, and cultures to give them the opportunity to share their stories with the world.

**Kate-Yeonjae Jeong (she/her), 19, Light Up Network, Houston, Texas (2023 Fellow)** This project fosters intergenerational connections and partners with nursing homes, veterans' hospitals, and hospices by hosting painting and poetry workshops for the elderly who seldom receive visitors.

**Jerry Chen (he/him), 19, Legal Studies Institute, Brooklyn, New York (2023 Fellow)** This project focuses on the lack of legal education in both public schools and low-income neighborhoods by advancing introductory civil rights and legal education to secondary students in New York City.

**Esha & Shreyaa, 20 & 19, NEST4US, Ashburn, VA (2021 Fellows)** NEST4US is dedicated to providing volunteer solutions for the community to make the world better through kindness.

**Banks, 17, The Young Writers Workshop, Jacksonville, FL (2022 Fellow)** The Young Writers Workshop is a youth-led summer program dedicated to fostering a love for creative writing and reading among underserved children in Jacksonville, Florida. Concluding the workshop, each child composes their own short story which is then published, printed, and delivered to their home.

**Isabella, 19, I Matter, Landenberg, PA (2021 Fellow)** The "I Matter" poetry and art competition is a special program created to provide a forum for youth to process the pain they felt after watching news coverage of the killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd.

**Jonathan, 20, Miami, FL, Helping Hands (2020 Fellow)** Helping Hands helps high school students learn 3D printing skills to make 3D printed prosthetic hands and distribute them to people in need.

**Sunya, 19, #MyStory Program, Buffalo, NY (2022 Fellow)** #MyStory Program aims to unite people with stories, developing immigrant narratives through the combination of oral history, narrative therapy, and portrait exhibition to promote diversity, inclusion, and equity.

**Avery, 16, Love Carries On, Chicago, IL (2022 Fellow)** Avery's Love Carries On Drive purchases carry-on duffel bags and luggage tags for foster children in need, helping to provide them with the proper essentials to have a safe and easy transition when moving from home to

home. Donations can be made through a quick Amazon-link purchase, that will then be sent and donated to a local child welfare agency.

**To learn more about Riley's Way, visit [RileysWay.org](https://RileysWay.org) or support the Movement on Instagram [@rileyswayfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/rileyswayfoundation) and Facebook [@RileysWayFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/RileysWayFoundation).**

### **About Riley's Way Foundation**

Riley's Way is a national nonprofit that invests in and supports the next generation of kind leaders. They provide young people with the programs, support, and inclusive community they need to thrive as changemakers, including seed funding for social impact projects, coaching and skill-building, networking opportunities, and a peer community.

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