2022
AWARD RECIPIENTS
ALABAMA

Lina Jabr is a senior at Hoover High School in Hoover, Alabama. Lina serves as secretary of the Hoover chapter of Diversify Our Narrative and as an organizer for her local Student Diversity Council. Lina has strived to promote a diverse curriculum in her school system by presenting her school system’s board with ideas to implement diverse literature into the curriculum. She has also worked to bring exposure to the diversity of her school by organizing and promoting a Multicultural Expo for her school. This event highlighted booths featuring six cultures represented at Hoover. This expo was open to all students and faculty to come to during their lunch periods. Students were encouraged to learn about these cultures through student-led activities and discussions. This event helped expose students to the cultures of their classmates, along with facilitating meaningful conversations and providing the skills to better interact with new cultures in the future. Lina also manages and is editor-in-chief of a newsletter called TEA that promotes unbiased news written for students, by students. She works to bring more attention to learning about other cultures and backgrounds to make sure that no other students have to go through the struggle of feeling invisible that she did. She wants to secure a better future in the lives of future generations by advocating for changes within her school system.

AT LARGE REGION

Andrea (Anie) Udosen is a senior at Fairfield High School in Fairfield, Ohio. Anie founded Fairfield for Change, an organization to advocate for diversity and inclusion within the Fairfield City School District, serving over 10,000 students in Butler County, Ohio. In response to the deaths of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery in 2020, Anie created a viral video featuring school board members, administration, teachers and students to show solidarity for Fairfield’s Black community. Additionally, she planned a virtual conference to spark conversations about inequality and racial reconciliation within the district. Through multiple discussions involving her superintendent, administrative staff, school board, teachers, community members and students, she created an action plan to develop a more inclusive school culture, and has spent the past two years instituting several new programs and initiatives. One of the first projects was to address her school’s “Indian” mascot, which had represented the Fairfield City School district for nearly one hundred years. She wrote the district’s official land acknowledgment statement and installed eleven land acknowledgement plaques in all district buildings to amplify Native voices. She developed an educational program called Together Talks to discuss the importance of empathy, and conducted interactive workshops with over 100 middle school students. During the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, Anie designed bracelets for a #StopAsianHate fundraiser, and donated $300 to a local Asian organization facing hardship during the pandemic. She coordinated a virtual story time with Ashley Aya Ferguson, a local children’s book author, at three Fairfield elementary schools to empower students to embrace their differences and encourage kindness. As a senior at Fairfield High School, she’s also planned numerous activities for high school students throughout the school year, partnering with Cincinnati Public Radio, JPMorgan Chase and Google, bringing together journalists and technologists to inform students about how to use their passions to drive social change. Additionally,
she utilizes the Fairfield for Change Instagram to spread awareness about different cultures and serves as the lead producer and editor for Time Out, the official FFC podcast. She was awarded the Fairfield Community Foundation $3000 Grant to fund these initiatives. Her efforts to improve community relations were featured in PBS’s “Urban Consulate: Equity in Education” episode and she is also the recipient of the Equity Justice Initiative Racial Justice Essay Prize.

CALIFORNIA (LOS ANGELES REGION)

Millie Liao is a junior at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. She is the founder of the Youth Against Hate Coalition, a group of hundreds of organizations that work together to uplift the stories of local LA youth calling for change. With the coalition, Millie works to give youth platforms within traditionally “adults-only” spaces, because she believes that youth deserve a say in their future. By working with organizations such as Make Noise Today, the ACLU of Southern California, and more, she has led national campaigns featuring student activists and their unique stories. In total, Millie has worked with more than 700 students to launch campaigns through organizations within the Youth Against Hate coalition. Over 10,000 youth organizers from across the nation have joined the campaigns she has led. Furthermore, there are more than 200 adult representatives from different industries dedicated to working with Youth Against Hate. Millie is dedicated to supporting each and every one of her fellow youth storytellers. She is a strong believer in the inherent power of stories, and therefore works to nurture the storytelling skills of other teens so they can harness their experiences and use them to start campaigns that create change and empower others. Furthermore, Millie is very passionate about organizing for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) issues. She founded the AAPI Alliance Club, which — with 84 members — is the second largest club in her school. The AAPI Alliance Club is also the first club at her school to serve AAPI students and organize for AAPI issues. In 2020, she worked with the Racial Awareness Club and school faculty and administrators to hold a school-wide webinar that spread awareness about the increasing anti-Asian hate crimes during the pandemic and provided a healing space every Tuesday online for students who wanted to share any experiences they had and be heard and uplifted. This year, she has continued to deepen the understanding and appreciation of Asian culture within her school by holding culture festivals, such as a Seollal celebration and a Lunar New Year festival. She has raised over $1,000 so far, which she plans to donate to victims of hate crimes at the end of the year.
CALIFORNIA (SAN DIEGO REGION)

Zachary Patterson is a senior at University City High School in San Diego, California. Zachary is the first student to serve as a member of the San Diego Board of Education, representing over 100,000 students. As a young student, Zachary was frustrated by persistent power structures which sought to utilize students only to the extent that it supported their message. Leading a campaign with students from across San Diego, Zachary successfully advocated for the creation of a district-wide Student Advisory Board and the addition of a student to the school board. Zachary was successful in creating the role and subsequently winning the first district election for Student Board Member. Recognizing the necessity for diverse experiences to define district policy decisions, Zachary quickly started his term by removing barriers to district-level participation like citizenship and GPA, which sought to unnecessarily exclude students from providing the real experiences of their education system. With a focus on ensuring all students are represented, Zachary required the district’s Student Advisory Board to convene only when students from all areas of the school district were formally represented. During the summer of 2020, working with fellow students, Zachary successfully advocated for the creation of a task force reviewing the role of school police and the creation of an independent citizens’ oversight committee on racial justice and equity chaired by students. In San Diego Unified, Zachary’s work has helped bring the critical importance of accurate student voice to the forefront. Throughout his service, Zachary remained frustrated by the challenges he faced as a student in a room of adults. With time, he realized how Student School Board Members across the state were effectively stopped from improving the school system for their peers. Over many months, Zachary led the founding of the California Student Board Member Association (CSBMA), which equips student school board members with the resources to fight for educational equity and collectively advocates for increased support systems for marginalized students. CSBMA directly represents over 60 Student Board Members who in turn are the formal representatives for over 1.9 million students. With frequent discussions on topics ranging from equitable outcomes to closing the achievement gap, Student Board Members in CSBMA have changed district policies surrounding the role of school police, the school-to-prison pipeline, academic tracking and unrepresentative advanced classes. With a fervent belief that every student deserves a high-quality public education, Zachary continues to fight for accurate student representation in order to ensure stronger communities and public schools.

CALIFORNIA (SAN FRANCISCO REGION)

Grace Xia is a senior at Aragon High School in San Mateo, California. In 2020, she founded Asian Uplift, a 501(c)(3) social justice organization empowering Asian communities through education, service and activism. Following the Atlanta shooting that killed six Asian women, Grace spearheaded San Mateo County’s Unite with Asians Rally to denounce anti-Asian hate and to amplify the unheard voices of Asian women. Featuring a panel of primarily Asian and Pacific Islander (API) women leaders, the rally and march united more than 300 attendees, including attack survivors and the family of Vicha Ratanapakdee, a Thai grandfather who was beaten to death in San Francisco. Following the targeted assault and robbery of an elderly Asian
woman, Grace led Asian Uplift’s collaboration with an adult-led organization to launch a boots-on-the-ground public safety initiative to assist local senior citizens and deter attackers. In May, Asian Uplift collaborated with the Millbrae Anti-Racist Coalition and Millbrae Community TV to launch an InspirAsians interview series and social media campaign to recognize inspiring API individuals through video interviews and posts, reaching hundreds. Asian Uplift later worked with the local elementary/middle school district’s Sanctuary Task Force on its API Listening Campaign, which aimed to empower Asian youth in the wake of hate crimes. Asian Uplift is currently undertaking a Pride Campaign to destigmatize LGBTQ+ identities within API communities and a Mental Health Campaign to support API mental health services. With an emphasis on minority unity, Asian Uplift plans to launch a Minorities Unite Campaign to strengthen unity between minorities against structural injustices, as well as a voter education campaign to increase API voting accessibility. Asian Uplift regularly posts informative toolkits on its website to share resources regarding world crises. As co-editor-in-chief of Aragon High School’s student-run newspaper, Grace leads 13 editors and more than 50 staffers to produce monthly newspapers for over 1600 readers. As president of her school’s Chinese Culture Club, Grace also organizes weekly meetings to educate students on Chinese history, language, and arts. Grace has been featured in The Wall Street Journal and in local news for her leadership and activism.

COLORADO

Kaviya Chidambaram is a junior at Broomfield High School in Broomfield, Colorado. After recognizing the lack of representation in the education system as an issue that she, as a student, could change, Kaviya co-founded her school district’s Diversify Our Narrative (DON) chapter. Diversify Our Narrative is a national student-led initiative that works towards equitable and anti-racist representation in our education system through curriculum change and community power. As co-director of the chapter, Kaviya helps empower students to advocate for racial justice in their community. They work to develop accountability across all school constituencies and feedback towards district-wide growth. Their chapter began by collecting petition signatures and then rallying community members to give public comments to the district board. Their chapter has since introduced anti-racist texts to their district’s resource list to help ensure all students see themselves represented in their classrooms. They also conduct interviews with teachers across high schools in the district about the issues educators see in the system. They are working to collect district-wide data on student perception of equity in the current curriculum and teaching practices. This data will provide feedback to teachers on how to improve representation in their classrooms as defined by their students. By providing a student voice as a person of color in district-level conversations about education, Kaviya helps introduce new perspectives in discussions about race and identity in the classroom. Continuously reflecting with teachers, district leaders and students ensures all stakeholders are involved in creating a more equitable system. Kaviya also served as a director of communications for DON’s national team. She helped found DON’s international branch, helping students around the world set up chapters in their own districts and advising them as they work towards increasing representation and anti-racist teaching practices in their schools. Throughout her time as a communications director, Kaviya helped establish and advise over thirty district chapters. Kaviya currently serves as co-executive director of DON’s national communications council, where she supports other directors of communication in guiding the chapters they advise.
 CONNECTICUT

**Aminieli James Hopson** is a senior at Edwin O. Smith High School in Storrs, Connecticut. In November 2020, Aminieli founded E.O. Smith’s Cultural Awareness Brigade (CAB). After transferring to E.O. Smith High School as a sophomore, Aminieli recognized a lack of recognition and celebration of BIPOC students’ presence and achievements. He wrote and implemented CAB’s guiding principles, core values and mission statement. CAB unites, advocates for and supports high school students who are members of historically underrepresented groups, specifically students of color. CAB enhances the school experience and impacts the cultural environment for the entire community by promoting ethnic and multicultural awareness. The Cultural Awareness Brigade achieves this by (1) developing and practicing skills in advocacy, (2) creating a safe space of support for all students to share their experiences, (3) providing educational programming, (4) encouraging fellowship opportunities and (5) advancing student awareness of school-wide leadership opportunities. CAB began with five students and three advisors and soon rose to 85 students, faculty and staff. Aminieli and the members of CAB began to shift the school culture. The organization advocated for and established the high school’s first Cultural Center, located in the school’s library, in 2021. CAB students work together to collect and create educational resources to share with the school community via Instagram, Canvas and the Cultural Center. Aminieli recognized the opportunity to promote heritage months and diversify the curriculum. In the aftermath of George Floyd’s death, Aminieli also joined E.O. Smith’s Deliberation and Discourse Project, a student-led initiative dedicated to elevating student voices and fostering equitable conversations by creating public forums and participatory budgeting. With the work of these two initiatives, Aminieli facilitates workshops and public forums, and was a featured panelist on incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion in educational spaces for E.O. Smith’s professional development day. Aminieli continues to lead in his community, serving as the president of E.O. Smith’s National Honor Society chapter and co-captain of his school debate team. Through communication, service and leadership, he believes anyone can create an optimal learning environment for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion.

 FLORIDA (MIAMI REGION)

**Danielle Respler** is a junior at Miami Country Day School in Miami, Florida. Her great-grandparents survived the Holocaust, and as a Fourth Generation Holocaust survivor, she believes it is her duty to educate her community as much as possible about social justice. To that end, Danielle is the co-founder of the Indigenous Advocates Association (IAA), a student-led interest group with the objective of promoting education and awareness regarding underrepresented and neglected Indigenous peoples. The IAA breaks down barriers that violate Indigenous communities, and uncovers and discusses the beauty and truths of Indigenous cultures in hopes of creating new waves of empathy, compassion, and genuine advocacy, and encourages deep learning and understanding by listening to voices from these communities. “I am not Indigenous; however, I am an ally.” Danielle has also been selected to be part of a group at her school, called CAUSE, which stands for Creating Awareness, Understanding and Social Equity.
As a member of this group, she has been able to bring light to issues that have never previously been addressed at her school. Before IAA was created, issues regarding Indigenous communities were rarely discussed on campus. Some class curricula included an Indigenous unit, which is where Danielle was introduced to the severe issues Indigenous communities face, but no action was taking place to help any of these communities or to educate the whole school about these topics. Working with one of her teachers, Danielle has created incredible opportunities for her school community to speak with local and international Indigenous activists and advocates, fundraised to provide clean running water to homes in the Navajo Nation, created exhibits that have been displayed in open spaces on campus, and hosted classroom takeovers for high school and elementary school students. Outside of Miami Country Day, Danielle gives her time to Achieve Miami, a volunteer program in which she mentors students in literacy and social emotional skills at under-resourced elementary schools, and Jewish Community Services, where she volunteers at the local Kosher Food Bank.

FLORIDA (TAMPA REGION)

Bernadette Nwokeji is a senior enrolled in Riverview High School’s International Baccalaureate Program in Sarasota, Florida. Bernadette has maintained a natural inclination towards public health and politics since her youth, and engages in activities that highlight the intersection of the two — including, but not limited to, serving in leadership roles with Youth Council of Sarasota, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties, WSLR-LP 96.5, the League of Women Voters, Teen Court, Riverview High Student Government, Speech and Debate, and Mock Trial. With her ultimate goal being to establish racial equity within her community and beyond, Bernadette drafted legislation that tackles the invasive and visible remnant of racial segregation: food deserts. After meeting with and receiving the Florida Department of Agriculture Consumer Services’ blessing, Bernadette petitioned all throughout summer 2021 and received bipartisan sponsorship from Senator Shevrin Jones and Representative Amber Mariano for her bill, now titled the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI). HFFI entered the 2022 Florida legislative session as two identical bills in the Florida House (HB 1311) and Senate (SB 1450), and aims to provide nonprofit organizations and community development financial institutions with ready access to education, funding and other information beneficial for dismantling these geographic fate-sealers. Moreover, through grassroot efforts, Bernadette created SHARE Wholeness, her nonprofit organization that alleviates food hunger and insecurity at the local level. Since Bernadette credits her success to education, as she believes it is the cornerstone of advocacy, the vessel from which change is forged, Bernadette is spearheading a girls’ mentoring program, where she aims to instill them with the confidence that equipped her with the ambition to pursue her passions. In the fall, Bernadette plans to attend college and will be continuing her education on racial disparities and methods to resolve them through studying health policy and engineering.
GEORGIA

Allison Hunter, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, is currently a senior at South Atlanta High School, where she serves as South Atlanta High School Student Government Association president and chairwoman of the Student Advisory Council for Atlanta Public Schools, which caters to over 50,000 students within the district. Within her role as president of the Young Mobilizers (an Atlanta social mobility organization for youth), she has worked diligently with her peers to bring more opportunities, resources, exposure and voice to youth individuals and their families. Allison created and spearheaded the first homeless initiative, the Protect the Homeless Atlanta Campaign, where her organization rallied to provide care packages, services and clothing for over 500 homeless individuals in the area. Allison planned the first college tour with the Young Mobilizers, which took 12 Atlanta students on a land-grant university tour to Tennessee, Missouri and Georgia. She also served as co-creator, filmmaker and producer of a documentary titled, “United: A Voice for the Voiceless,” which focused on the inequities of student education and the community of Atlanta Public Schools. The documentary gave students the ability to voice their opinions on the atmosphere of their school communities and inspired adults to take initiative to address these problems. The film validated the inequities of course offerings, concerns for safety and the desire for change across the student population, which was presented to the Board of Education. Allison created a framework for student-led committees that allow APS students to oversee policies and inequities made by the stakeholders and create solutions that solve them. The work that was spearheaded by Allison and her co-producers prompted the 2021 opening of the Atlanta Public Schools Center for Equity and Social Justice, which addresses concerns of inequality within the APS student community.

ILLINOIS

Kashyap Rajesh is a sophomore at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois. Kashyap serves as the global chapter director at Encode Justice, a coalition of youth activists and changemakers fighting for human rights and justice under artificial intelligence (AI). In this role, he has spearheaded local, national and international political advocacy efforts, while growing community organizing hubs in nearly 30 regions across the globe. As global chapter director, Kashyap works with chapters to counteract regional issues on multiple fronts: community organizing, political advocacy and educational content creation. Doing so has helped make local communities safer through the passage of local ordinances with the help of specific chapters. He has met with more than 25 congressional lawmakers to push for a federal moratorium on biometric surveillance, most notably lobbying in person on Capitol Hill. To honor Black History Month, Kashyap ran several workshops across the country, calling attention to the threats posed by automated technologies, especially to Black communities. Kashyap represents Encode Justice at biweekly meetings with the White House Office of Public Engagement and advises the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), where he addresses key issues relating to tech policy while also providing a youth perspective on the creation of the AI Bill of Rights. He also has been featured on CNN. For the next couple of years at Encode Justice, he will work with an international cohort of chapters to solidify partnerships with the White House OSTP and American
Civil Liberties Union, advancing the organization's fight against inaccurate algorithms which disproportionately harm minorities. Outside of Encode Justice, Kashyap serves as the first ever high-school intern for the Illinois Democratic County Chairs Association while working closely with several high-ranking policy makers to author policy that addresses racial inequity.

KANSAS (KANSAS CITY REGION)

**Soledad (Solie) Edison** is a junior at Free State High School in Lawrence, Kansas, where Solie serves as the council chair of the Student Equity Council. The council works to develop spaces for underprivileged students in a predominately white school and area. As part of the council, Solie helps review district and school policies that deal with harassment involving people of the marginalized communities of Free State. Solie pushes the continued incorporation of diverse values and respect through collaboration with the Board of Education and history curriculum revamp directors. During Black History Month, Solie and a Freestate Advanced Placement U.S. history teacher created biographies for important black figures for each day of the month; there are plans to do the same for Women’s History Month an Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Solie also works for public advocacy for marginalized groups in the district and more broadly, developing a Multicultural Week to celebrate culture in Lawrence and conduct neglected but needed conversations on difficult topics such as race, gender and sexuality. Solie also created and implemented safe spaces for students to learn from invited speakers and educate each other from personal experiences, in the classroom as well as in Student Halls, where students can learn more about the things happening in our world today, as well as ask questions that their teachers may not always have the answers to. The council will continue to work in partnership with the African and African American Studies Department at the University of Kansas and the equity councils of the Lawrence middle schools in order to connect students from all age groups into one common thread of social justice and community work. Solie plans to continue to work in student advocacy and educational activism.

MARYLAND

**Emmanuella Osei** is a senior at Wilde Lake High School in Columbia, Maryland. Emmanuella is the founder and leader of Rise Up Mentorship, a program developed to support Black and Brown students as they tackle rigorous courses. Emmanuella is a Ghanaian immigrant, and when she moved to the United States, she noticed that there were fewer Black and Brown students in honors, Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement courses. In her 11th grade dual enrollment English course, she had the opportunity to research the system inequities in education and develop a proposal: a mentorship program that would support Black and Brown students pursuing these courses and encourage more minorities to enroll in challenging courses. What was then simply a research project turned into a school wide program. Rise Up Mentorship pairs students with experience in rigorous courses with Black and Brown students who are “rising up” to an upper-level course or students who need support in these courses. Each mentor in the
program is assigned a mentee to support throughout the year. Currently, Rise Up consists of approximately 18 mentors and 20 mentees. The mentorship program also hosts various monthly workshops for both mentors and mentees as well as homework help sessions every Wednesday. So far this year, the program has held workshops on time management, studying, selecting courses, building resumes, interviews and more. In January 2022, Emmanuella and the leadership team of Rise Up created resources to guide Wilde Lake students as they chose their courses for the next school year, highlighting the benefits and promoting enrollment in upper-level courses. For spring 2022, Rise Up has created a graduation and post-high school series to help students prepare for their next steps after high school. In addition to leading the program, Emmanuella has two mentees with whom she meets regularly to provide guidance and support. Emmanuella is extremely passionate about equity and giving back to her community. Although she will be graduating this year, she will be passing down her leadership role in order to ensure that the program will continue to provide support to Black and Brown students and increase the number of these students in her school’s upper-level courses. Emmanuella would like to thank her 11th grade English teacher, Kaitlyn Curtis, for her encouragement and sponsorship of this program, and her principal, Marcy Leonard, for her support. She would also like to thank the Rise Up leadership team for all their hard work and consistent support throughout this program.

**MASSACHUSETTS**

*Andrew Yang* is a junior at Arlington High School in Arlington, Massachusetts. Andrew is the president and founder of the Arlington High School Asian American Coalition (AHSAAC). After seeing the effect of increased national anti-Asian hate on the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in his school, Andrew decided to found the AHSAAC to spread awareness about issues that impact the AAPI community and combat racial prejudice. Recognizing that prejudice is learned at a young age, he has strived to develop cultural empathy among students by helping to hold webinars about racism and how to become anti-racist for over a thousand students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. During these webinars, he discovered that there is little cultural representation in children’s books. To address this, he collaborated with a local non-profit organization, raised $1250 to provide 336 culturally diverse books for all of the kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms in the district, and organized groups of students to read the books to the students. Additionally, Andrew noticed that there was almost no AAPI representation in the curriculum, and minimal resources for AAPI students. He highlighted issues in the AAPI community through numerous in-school presentations, social media posts and fundraisers, reaching over 1400 students. With his school’s history department, Andrew created a more AAPI-inclusive history curriculum. Moreover, he has held in-person events to support the community — including a Stop AAPI Hate Rally and BIPOC Mental Health workshops — and conducted interviews with school administration as part of the hiring process for a new director of diversity, equity and inclusion. Andrew has also been involved in his community outside of Arlington High School and was a panelist at Arlington Human Rights Commission’s town-wide webinar “Stand Against Racism: Elevating AAPI Voices.”
**MICHIGAN**

*Vaishnavi Tummala* is a junior at Washtenaw International High School in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where she serves as junior class president. As Michigan and the city of Detroit experience growing rates of youth homelessness that disproportionately affect black youth, Vaish has founded the Hope for Living Project, a nonprofit focused on racial inequality within homelessness and other pressing issues within the community. Through her organization, Vaish raises awareness and funds for partnering non-profits working toward addressing the same issues. Vaish's latest karaoke fundraiser provided direct aid and hybrid programming to 590 youth during the midst of the pandemic. Though Vaish faced difficulties operating during the pandemic (limited bandwidth and wavering support), she persisted to fight for what she believes in. In order to sustain her organization, Vaish also started a club at school. Outside of her organization, Vaish is a board member for the Neutral Zone, a diverse, youth-driven teen center dedicated to promoting personal growth through artistic expression, activism and the exchange of ideas.

**MISSOURI (ST. LOUIS REGION)**

*Abram Barker* is a senior at Lebanon High School (LHS) in Lebanon, Missouri. Abram is the producer of The Hive, their high school news program, and is co-president of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club at LHS. During 2020, Abram created a twelve-minute documentary telling the story of local African American educator Eleanor Ford. Even though Mrs. Ford passed away roughly thirty years ago, her wide impact is felt today in the lives of her hundreds of former students. Abram has spent their entire life in rural Lebanon, Missouri, and became interested in visual storytelling through an interest in videography in early adolescence. While those videos harbored a more humorous tone, interest in storytelling evolved into this documentary. At the heart of “Good Morning, Mrs. Ford,” is not a signifying act of heroism or achievement, but the story of African Americans in small-town Missouri. Abram’s documentary serves to illuminate a largely ignorant community through a heart-warming story of a great educator, while visiting the topic of Lebanon’s very real past of segregation and racism following integration. Abram has also been involved in documentaries for National History Day that highlight the stories of other marginalized people, namely World War II’s all-female Russian regiment — the Night Witches — and Gad Beck, a Jewish and homosexual Holocaust survivor responsible for saving the lives of their fellow Jews in hiding. Abram intends to continue pursuing a career as a documentarian and journalist, employing their skills to highlight lesser-known figures in our history and current communities.
NEW JERSEY (CENTRAL/SOUTHERN REGION)

**Kyler Zhou** is a junior at Princeton Day School in Princeton, New Jersey. He is the founder and executive director of Hear Our Voices magazine, a student-led literary magazine that publishes monthly issues focusing on the uplifting of Asian American stories to counter the harmful impositions of the model minority myth and other challenges of the Asian American identity. He was inspired to start the magazine after publishing an op-ed in The (Newark) Star-Ledger and The Princeton Packet after the murder of George Floyd about the importance of unity among people of color. Since its inception in September of 2020, Hear Our Voices has reached an audience of over 10,000 readers and has writers from all around the country. In addition to publishing, the magazine has also joined advocacy and lobbying efforts with Asian American organizations like Make Us Visible New Jersey and the Center for American Progress to advocate and develop inclusive history curricula. This led to the passage of NJ Senate Bill S4021, which made New Jersey the second state to mandate the teaching of Asian American history in K-12 public schools. He has also organized teach-ins in libraries around central New Jersey to teach Asian American history and literature to younger audiences. At school, he is one of the heads of the Asian American and Pacific Islander affinity group, the editor of the school newspaper and a student council representative. In his free time, he enjoys soccer and playing piano.

NEW JERSEY (NORTHERN NJ REGION)

**Maya Dummett** is a senior at Morristown High School in Morristown, New Jersey, where she serves as the president of Melanin Minds. As president, Maya cultivates a community-based space where students of color can find fellowship and take collective social justice action through productive discussions and service initiatives. Each week, Maya hosts meetings that begin with an educational segment, detailing the intricacies and nuances of race, and ends with an open forum, engaging members in a dialogue about tangible steps towards racial equity. Beyond weekly meetings, Melanin Minds is a pillar of the Morristown community, leading projects such as a school-wide speaker series for Black History Month to amplify Black culture and a Cultural Dinner Night to showcase the diversity of Morristown High School while collecting donations for the Table of Hope of Morristown. Melanin Minds is one of the leading student organizations pursuing racial justice in Morristown. Maya is also a National Liberation Leader and Youth Facilitator with Diversity Talks. Every month, she leads adults from schools, companies and non-profits through interactive workshops about race and its intersections with gender, class and other aspects of identity with the ultimate goal of dismantling systemic oppression. Prior to stepping into this role, Maya completed 40 hours of diversity, equity and inclusion training and received the Perceptive Powerhouse Award from Diversity Talks for her leadership. Through this work, Maya has impacted over 2,000 youth and adults. Maya’s hope is to stay involved in these activities by providing mentorship and guidance to future youth leaders even as she prepares to leave for college in the fall of 2022.
NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY REGION)

**Brian Mhando** is a senior at Regis High School in New York City, New York. Brian serves as the president of multiple groups including Regis’ Black Student Union and Heritage Club. In the wake of America’s racial reckoning in the summer of 2020, Brian founded his school’s Black Student Union. While engaging in racial dialogue within the club, Regis’ Black and Latino students, as well as alumni, attempted to raise awareness throughout the entire school community by detailing their racial experiences on an Instagram page titled @blackatregis. Despite a desire to talk about race, there was still little to no racial dialogue among students and faculty members within the school. In response, Brian initiated an interview project in hope of creating intergenerational dialogue between students and teachers. With the help of 18 other students and two faculty members, he was able to amass 54 hours of interviews from nearly half of the faculty and staff at Regis. Many faculty and staff benefited from having a casual, yet meaningful conversation; one staff member, for example, stated that “[he/she has] so very much to learn about institutional racism [and] how to talk about race.” Brian is now working with other schools across the country to help facilitate similar dialogue in more institutions, and is writing a research paper detailing his findings from the interview project at Regis. Brian also created a debate curriculum for young kids via the REACH program, a year-round enrichment program that helps students of color and lower-income families gain admission to private schools. This debate program encourages REACH students to join Regis’ elite speech and debate team. So far, a few students from his first speech and debate class have joined Regis’ debate team as freshmen and have found great success. Brian hopes to inspire fellow speech and debate kids from Regis to continue this service once he passes on the torch when he graduates.

NEW YORK (ROCHESTER REGION)

**Sarah Adams** is a 10th grader at East High School in Rochester, New York. Sarah recognized at a very young age the power of her voice to effect change and is working tirelessly by engaging her peers to do the same alongside her. While her focus is on racial equity in education, her activism has no boundaries. As a pivotal member of Teens With Attitude (TWA), a youth coalition comprised of several Rochester area youth organizations, Sarah and other students fought for and won foundation aid for the Rochester City School District. She further advocated in a “We Won but We Ain’t Done!” Youth Field Day to spread awareness about students’ priorities in terms of how that aid would be used. One critical impact of their efforts was that fifty fewer RCSD teachers had their jobs cut; most of those teachers were people of color and had been the district’s most recent hires. Sarah says there was a culture shift that made the youth voice much more valuable, and she is working to maintain that dynamic. Sarah is also a youth organizer at the Center for Teen Empowerment. She says she will continue to look at the various issues youth face today and create and inspire dialogue that will help combat those problems to effect real system changes.
**OHIO**

*Diamond Rhodes* is a senior at Padua Franciscan High School in Parma, a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. Diamond is the current president of the first cultural representative and respective organization at Padua known as RACE, or Respect All Cultures Equally. Diamond is a well-known speaker with a passion for social justice. She publicly spoke during the Cleveland March for Life against gender inequality and the poor education at Cleveland public schools. She coordinated the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland high school luncheon on gun and gang violence, and organized an informational combative gathering with multiple Catholic high schools to address sex trafficking and racial injustice. Diamond has focused her attention on her school and community's inequality. Through RACE, an organization created in response to the microaggressive policies and rules that disproportionately affect students of color, she addresses the daily occurrences of racist, sexist and homophobic experiences minorities faced at Padua. Diamond and several other students coordinated dialogues and presentations with the administrative team and entire faculty. During these meetings they emphasized the message that racism, sexism and homophobia are ignorance and the cure is education. The organization successfully took on microaggressive policies that banned cultural headwear and perpetuated racial stereotypes about minorities. Through their message, they inspired teachers to coordinate with students in diversity committees and begin the conversation on racial and gender injustice while also introducing more diverse figures and their works into the curriculum. Diamond continues to participate in dialogues, diverse celebrations and conversations with the administrative team to increase awareness of hate and what can be done to redirect it into love, respect and appreciation of minorities at Padua. When Diamond, her council, and teachers started spreading awareness of these issues, they faced backlash, but persisted despite opposition to these changes. Diamond's main goal is to inspire minorities to advocate for themselves despite what stands against them. The RACE organization, its message and its foundation will continue growing in Padua, and Diamond will pursue social advocacy and systems change in her career.

**PENNSYLVANIA (PHILADELPHIA REGION)**

*Isabella Hanson* is a junior at Kennett High School in Pennsylvania. At the age of 14, Isabella was inspired to launch a national poetry competition on why Black Lives Matter. Powered by Gucci, Isabella’s “I Matter” poetry contest has grown to draw participation from students in 42 states and over 30 countries. With players from the NBA and the NFL serving as the judges, the top poems and art are made into a compilation book to promote social justice and equality. The “I Matter” project followed her 2020 Juneteenth Celebration, which she hosted to bring racial healing to the community at the historic Fussell House — a site which helped lead over 2,000 slaves to freedom. Her 2021 Juneteenth Celebration was held at the nation’s first historically Black college: Cheyney University. Isabella holds leadership roles in her school’s Model United Nations, Diversity and Feminist Clubs. She is a member of her school’s track team and the Humanitarian Club. Isabella enjoys writing poetry and is a member of the Live Like Blaine Leadership Academy. For almost a year, Isabella has served as an advisor for Lady Gaga’s Born This
Way Foundation. In February 2022, Isabella was one of 25 students selected nationally for Prudential Financial’s inaugural class of Emerging Visionaries. Isabella has also won over 20 grant awards for her work and has been featured on Nickelodeon’s Kid of the Year program, as well as in Forbes Magazine and Medium.com.

**PENNSYLVANIA (PITTSBURGH REGION)**

*Simone Maggie Gibson Thomas* is a senior at the Grier School in Tyrone, Pennsylvania. Simone Maggie serves as senior class treasurer, Grier Int/Advanced Dance Company member and founder of Beyond the Bubble Club. As Grier School continues to craft an excellent foundation of 7-12th grade education for international students, Simone has brought attention to unheard voices of racially charged student experiences. During her first year of high school, she formed the Beyond the Bubble Club to challenge faculty and students to go “beyond their bubble” of race and intersectionality. Simone Maggie has partnered with Penn State graduate student Kayla Fuentes-Packnick during Bubble Talks on the lack of acknowledging intersectionality and additionally had Penn State’s associate vice provost Jennifer Hamer speak to ‘Bubble Members’ on strategies to better address current race issues. While supplying her school body with dances, fundraisers and movie nights, her club’s main function is to host student-led panels in a format similar to TED talks. Audience members can ask or comment on any and all thoughts so that incorrect facts or offensive opinions are put to rest. Simone Maggie has cultivated a safe platform for students to speak with their staff and faculty on topics of race ranging from today’s issues of “Black Lives Matter” to the historical family backgrounds of international students. Beyond The Bubble has additionally opened discussions on racially charged situations that are difficult for majority-race Americans to address. Simone Maggie is determined to bring her international community together through mutual respect of cultures and communication. She continues to bring this hope and thinking to all her academic and extracurricular activities.

**TENNESSEE (MEMPHIS REGION)**

*Zahra Chowdhury* is a senior at Pleasant View School in Memphis, Tennessee. Her identity as a Muslim American and daughter of immigrants has encouraged her to work towards increasing equity and eliminating discrimination. As part of her social justice fellowship at BRIDGES USA, she created and organized the Counselors not Cops (CNC) campaign in Memphis with the intention of deconstructing the school-to-prison pipeline by replacing unnecessary law enforcement presences in schools with greater access to essential mental health professionals and resources. Through the CNC campaign, Zahra has helped mobilize students, parents and teachers across Memphis to ensure their voices and opinions are reflected in decisions that directly affect them. Her efforts have led to the removal of law enforcement in Frayser Community Schools and the implementation of restorative justice practices, including the abolition of suspensions and expulsions. The campaign secured major amendments to the Shelby County Schools’ Memorandum of Understanding with the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office, which ensured the safety...
and freedom of students during their interactions with law enforcement on and off campus. Her work has been uplifted by several prominent individuals and organizations, including the National Civil Rights Museum, which presented her with the Keeper of the Dream Award. Zahra is also passionate about racial justice, especially in the Muslim American community. As the youngest board member of 901 Ummah, a local nonprofit catered to young Muslim Americans, she helped launch “Towards Sacred Togetherness,” an effort that aims to eradicate anti-Blackness in the Memphis Muslim community through healthy spiritual dialogue. Zahra has organized events including discussions about the historic significance of Black Muslims in America, a book club about Islam and activism and panels about allyship to encourage acceptance and understanding within the Muslim community. Beyond these efforts, Zahra strives to promote justice and equity through other avenues, such as advising White House officials on policy recommendations regarding Asian American and Pacific Islander women and girls and fighting food insecurity in Memphis. Zahra hopes to continue her social justice work by pursuing a career in law with the intention of reforming the justice system into one that is truly restorative and rehabilitative.

TENNESSEE (NASHVILLE REGION)

Jadyn Sheats is a senior at the University School of Nashville in Nashville, Tennessee. Jadyn serves as the president of the Black Student Union; co-president of Core, a student-led organization that strives to promote self-reflection and inclusivity; a student ambassador; and a class representative. As a student leader, she spearheaded multiple diversity, equity and inclusion organizations and created the Change Project, which combated the Eurocentric curriculum and racially isolated community. Reaching hundreds of students and working with more than 20 faculty, her initiative gave her the opportunity to speak to teachers and students across the country at both the Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service Learning and the national People of Color Conference. Additionally, the initiative allowed marginalized students to feel heard, made education more accessible to other students and fostered a stronger, more inclusive community. She and her team accomplished this by auditing classes, having multiple meetings with faculty and emphasizing that change does not have to be revolutionary to transform how a minority feels in the classroom. Although the initial project is over, Jadyn has used the lessons she has learned as the foundation of her other organizations and is confident that the next leadership team will bring even more to the table.
TEXAS (DALLAS REGION)

**Zoya Haq** is a junior at the Hockaday School in Dallas, Texas. In June 2020, Zoya co-founded HiStory Retold, a student-led project committed to diversifying national curricula by developing online resources, organizing policy action pushes and sharing community stories. Drawing from their own personal experiences in the classroom, Zoya and her co-founders Lily, Makayla and Inaya recognized that single-scoped history curriculum negatively impacts minority students’ self-esteem and confidence, in turn exacerbating the systemic divisions present in our country today. They founded HiStory Retold to take a stand. Synthesizing action, content and their love of storytelling, HiStory Retold dismantles inequitable representation in history classrooms in order to create a more inclusive, understanding and just world. In her role as HiStory Retold’s president, Zoya oversees more than 50 student activists from 15 states on a weekly basis, helping to delegate leadership on items ranging from virtual outreach events to bill-writing campaigns. Since the launch of HiStory Retold’s website in July 2020, their U.S. history resources have been used more than 3000 times and have been implemented in three national classrooms. Currently, Zoya is conducting research on the effectiveness of HiStory Retold’s prototypal, changemaking-based history module, Partner+, and she hopes to use the data she collects to pitch Partner+ to the Texas State Board of Education this summer. For her work with HiStory Retold, Zoya has been recognized as an Ashoka Young Changemaker. Zoya also serves as a local head of a statewide campaign for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills-compliant Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) curriculum. In this role, she mobilizes AAPI youth in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to take a stand for the implementation of AAPI studies. Additionally, as a member of the 2021-2022 Campaign Activity and Management Program (CAMP) Fellows Cohort, Zoya is working to support inclusion-minded Dallas Independent School District School Board candidates in preparation for the May 2022 election cycle. The common thread that weaves its way throughout Zoya’s entire changemaking journey is her love for storytelling. With HiStory Retold, Texas for AAPI, CAMP and her other extracurricular ventures, Zoya is working to prove that stories can be harnessed as a tool for change. By uniting various community players under a common umbrella of mutual storytelling, Zoya’s work transcends boundaries, proving that inclusive education is not just a youth issue: it’s a universal one.

TEXAS (HOUSTON REGION)

**Hannah Guan** is a junior at Basis San Antonio Shavano in San Antonio, Texas. She put her concern for racial disparities in education into action when she founded San Antonio Math Include (SaMi, mathincludel.org), a world-renowned student-founded organization that provides greater access to STEM education for students from all racial backgrounds and cultural perspectives. With hundreds of volunteers, SaMi has formed an international network that offers equal access to high-quality education to all students in need, including free classes, summer camps, and seminars for students in grades K-12 who are historically marginalized students of color including Black, Latino and Indigenous youth. In 2021, Hannah organized one of the largest summer camps in the nation, where 3502 students in 223 schools attended 219 sessions of math, computer science, and artificial intelligence classes. To ensure that the online program was accessible to campers
from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Hannah offered Casting Your Future Scholarships for essential items, such as internet connections and microphones, which were needed for students to participate. Ultimately, Hannah organized the annual National Celebration of Inclusive Excellence Conference to bring students of all races from all over the world together to celebrate their math achievements. The conference invites keynote speakers with different identities to talk about their successful pathways to math. Students are able to meet mathematicians who have excelled and contributed and who are Black, Latinx, female, Indian and Native American. SaMi presented Distinguished Achievement Awards at the conference based on students’ contributions to their class environment and their progress during their course of learning. Ninety-five percent of the award recipients are students of color. Over the years, SaMi has grown to one of the largest student-founded platforms in the world for youth to reach their full potential through equal education.

WASHINGTON STATE (SEATTLE REGION)

Ella Sherin is a senior at Olympia High School (OHS) in Olympia, Washington. Ella has founded and leads the Olympia Native Students Union (ONSU), and worked to open a Title IX program in the Olympia School District. Previously the Olympia School District had no support systems in place for Native American students within their schools, and Ella worked with OHS and Olympia district administration to change this and raise awareness about the statistics Native students face in the school system and in their daily lives. With this, she pushed administrators to hire a Native American teacher to fill the Title IX position for the district, held workshops for staff to reform the history curriculum on Native people as a whole, and helped teachers realize why stereotypes and misrepresentation are problematic. Following this, she held community nights for students, staff and parents of Olympia High School to educate others on accurate Native American history and culture of their Indigenous Cascadia region and of the country. Continuing to grow the program, Ella taught local 5th grade classes on local Native American history and art. Each week Olympia High School Native Students meetings were held and led by Ella to bring Olympia Native students together to teach each other on their Native cultures and provide in-school support for one another. With the support of the ONSU, she planned and held a Native American Heritage assembly to display her culture to the school along with other Native students to raise awareness of Native American culture and traditions, including a demonstration of Fancy Shawl. By focusing on the traditional value of the seven generation rule, she has been able to show how her traditional values influence her daily life and why she looks to help raise up Native students and Indian Country now and in the future.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Damilola Awofisayo is a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia. She started her own hackathon called TecHacks, a nonprofit that describes its mission as “creating a supportive environment for girls everywhere to create, problem-solve and showcase their talents alongside like-minded females to compete and work with.” TecHacks hosts one of the largest student hackathons per year reaching over 800 students from more than 60 countries. In addition, TecHacks has been especially successful in increasing the population of women of color in hackathons, as 16 percent of their participants are Black women and 9 percent are Hispanic women; the national averages in 2020 were 0.7 percent and 1.2 percent respectively. Her work with TecHacks has been recognized by a number of media including CheddarTV, Yahoo, Apple Newsroom and Fox. Damilola represents Thomas Jefferson High School as one of Fairfax County’s Student Equity Ambassador Leaders (SEAL). In her role as a SEAL, she has helped draft equity-focused policy with Fairfax employees, speaks to staff groups throughout Fairfax County, and has provided input to school system leaders in 2020 on implementing “virtual” school, looking through the lens of equity and fairness for the numerous diverse groups of students and educators in Fairfax County Public Schools. It was through her collaboration with Jefferson’s faculty and staff Equity Team that she realized the need for Jefferson’s Student Equity Coalition. Since Damilola co-founded the coalition in 2021, members have engaged in critical conversations on prevalent, potentially divisive issues in the school community, including providing accurate information on the Jefferson admissions process, cross-class interaction on social media, and supporting the various cultural communities. Most recently, the coalition organized a November potluck using the Thanksgiving spirit to foster cultural affinity and a panel of school staff to speak about the Black experience in higher education. Jefferson’s Student Equity Coalition serves as a direct link between the school’s staff Equity Team, students, and student equity teams across Fairfax County Public Schools.
The Princeton Prize in Race Relations identifies and recognizes high school-age students who significantly engage and challenge their schools or communities to advance racial equity in order to promote respect and understanding among all people. Princeton Prize recipients receive a $1,000 monetary prize, and, under normal circumstances, an all-expenses-paid trip to the Princeton Prize Symposium on Race at Princeton University, as well as recognition by Princeton alumni at awards ceremonies in their local regions.

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