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Plymouth students receive NPFH Committee Outstanding Citizenship Award

COURTESY OF PLYMOUTH NO PLACE FOR HATE COMMITTEE

PLYMOUTH — The Plymouth No Place for Hate Committee has presented its fourth annual Outstanding Citizenship Award to two Plymouth High School students.

The purpose of this award is to recognize a student who has shown a commitment to social justice by challenging discrimination or bigotry through their actions, or who actively works to celebrate diversity and inclusivity or to protect the civil rights of all people in the community. The award is open to any high school student who is a Plymouth resident, regardless of whether they plan to attend college, grade level or what school is attended. The recipients were nominated by the faculty or guidance staff of their respective high schools. A financial gift is included in the award.

The recipient from Plymouth South High School is Annie Yaeger, who has just begun her senior year. She has been an active member of Plymouth South's Interact Club for three years and has served as its representative to the No Place for Hate Committee for the past two years. She has been active in the Club's volunteer activities at Benchmark Senior Living, including annual Christmas tree decoration and a Prom Fashion Show. She also conceived and organized a new event at Benchmark, a Senior Social, which was postponed due to COVID-19.

"Annie is a kind, caring, and empathetic young lady. She has worked conscientiously and humbly to improve her community; she has succeeded in making often overlooked members of the community feel special and valued," said Michelle Kelly, Yaeger's Interact Club advisor.

In celebration of National Women's Month in March, Yaeger organized Club members to read and record stories about inspiring women for broadcast on the No Place for Hate Committee's YouTube channel for the entire community to enjoy. Yaeger was also a speaker at the August 2020 "Under the Rock of Racial Healing, Learning and Good Trouble" event held at Brewster Gardens. In her spare time, Yaeger is also treasurer of the William Bradford Chapter of the National Honor Society, the president of the Plymouth South High School Theatre Guild and an intern at Tidmarsh Living Observatory's native plant nursery. Yaeger's favorite subject is math and she hopes to pursue a bachelor's degree in statistics and sociology.

"I believe that being a citizen comes with the responsibility of taking care of those around you, whether it's fighting for social justice or simply trying to brighten someone's day. This belief has been my guide for the positive change I hope to cause in the Plymouth community," said Yaeger.

The Award recipient from Rising Tide Public Charter School is Kyleigh O'Neil, who is also beginning her senior year. She is a lifelong Plymouth resident. She has been an active member of the school's social justice club, Rising for Equality, whose mission is to develop a more inclusive community.

"Kyleigh has shown herself to be a committed community member and worked hard to make all people feel in-



Annie Yaeger. COURTESY PHOTO



Kyleigh O'Neil. COURTESY PHOTO

cluded; she has not been afraid to speak out on behalf of others or to seek advice on how best to help those struggling around her," said Stephen Eesley, O'Neil's Rising for Equality advisor.

O'Neil was also a leader in her Civics Class project on criminal justice reform, whose aim was to find ways to restructure the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism. She is an active volunteer at several local food pantries as well as St. Peter's annual Giving Tree Program. O'Neil is a member of the National Honor Society, the Center Stage Dance Academy and an officer of the Massachusetts Junior Classical League. Her favorite subjects are math and science, and as to the future, she says that she is looking forward to expanding caring for and advocating for others by pursuing studies in nursing and health science.

"It is important for a community, no matter the size or how defined, to be caring, welcoming, and inclusive. It must care for its members and support the voices of those in need or to be their voice when they cannot speak for themselves," O'Neil said.

To make a donation to the No Place for Hate Committee Outstanding Citizenship Awards for future recipients, send a check to town of Plymouth, Attn. Treasurer, 26 Court St., Plymouth, MA 02360. Make checks payable to No Place for Hate Committee. Note that such contributions are not deductible for income tax purposes, as the NPFH Committee is part of the town of Plymouth's government and not a separate nonprofit organization. The Awards are funded through private donations.

For more information about the No Place for Hate Committee, visit <https://facebook.com/PlymouthNPFH> or <https://plymouthnoplacforhate.org>.