

NPFH Outstanding Citizenship Awards

Courtesy Plymouth
No Place for Hate Committee

PLYMOUTH - The Plymouth No Place for Hate Committee, a committee of the Town of Plymouth, has presented its sixth annual Outstanding Citizenship Award to three 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 his/her actions, and/or who actively works to celebrate diversity and inclusivity or to protect the civil rights of all people in our community. A financial gift is included in the award. The awards were presented at the July 25 Select Board Meeting.

The first recipient is Grace Elizabeth Hamilton, a rising senior at the Rising Tide Public Charter School. Grace is a founding member of the school's Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity Work Group, whose mission is to help make everyone feel like they have a place in the school and that their voice will be heard, and to educate others about minorities who have been mistreated and misunderstood. According to her College and Future Planning Counselor, Isabella Trauttmansdorf, she has always maintained a commitment to its values has actively recruited new members. Last year, Grace reached out to an uncle who leads Diversity and Inclusion initiatives at Bridgewater State University, and brought him in as a school speaker. She and her uncle also brought a group of Muslim students from BSU to speak with students about Ramadan, and how they overcome the racially charged hate they are forced to deal with on a daily basis. Previously, Grace took a leadership role in a collaborative "Racial Healing" Quilt project to raise awareness about diverse cultures within the school community, recruiting friends to join the project.

The second recipient of the award is Maria Eduarda Taborda Pereira, who is a 2023 graduate of Plymouth North High School. She was nominated by Matt Carpenito, the Friends Without Borders Club advisor. He says, "I have been amazed by the immeasurable impact Maria has had on advancing equity, justice, and inclusion throughout the



NPFH Award recipients l-r: Maria Eduarda Taborda Pereira, Alanna Rabbitt, Grace Elizabeth Hamilton. COURTESY PHOTO

Plymouth Public Schools community. Maria is driven by a deep-rooted conviction in this work, based in part on her experiences as an English learner." This motivated her to help ESL kids to be more included and to create a safe space for them to share their experiences at school with English speaking students. In March,

Maria helped to facilitate a recorded roundtable conversation held for former English Learners. This elicited powerful perspectives offered by the students about their elementary and middle school experiences. This will be shared with Plymouth Public Schools staff to promote a better understanding of English Learners' successes and challenges. Maria's leadership skills have also been of great benefit to the PNHS Equity and Justice Committee. This Spring, Maria helped to produce a video highlighting students' experiences of injustice and bigotry to raise awareness and affect change. As she puts it, "We created a

video that showed the insensitive comments we got around school. It was a way to show the staff things that go on everyday but which they don't see or hear."

The third recipient of the award is Alanna Rabbitt, who has just completed her junior year at Plymouth South High School. She was nominated by Keith Grasmann who was both her teacher and the Gay Straight Alliance Facilitator. The mission of the GSA is to unite queer and non-queer youth and to make the student body of Plymouth South safer and more accepting by spreading awareness and education. According to Keith, "she has always been motivated, engaged, and keen to work for change. This year, she took over and showed true leadership, compassion, and dedication. She kept the group organized and focused while we created the No Place for Hate Post-It Project." This project was done to raise awareness in the school of the discrimination that takes

place in the student body and to open up a dialogue. It consisted of a mural of encouraging and accepting messages which students wrote to speak out against discrimination. Alanna is a member of the Plymouth South Theatre Guild, and acted in its 2022 production of "The Laramie Project," a drama about the death of Matthew Shepard, a young man murdered for his identity as a gay man in the town of Laramie, Wyoming.

If you wish to help the No Place for Hate Committee to fund future Outstanding Citizenship Awards, you may send a check to Town of Plymouth, Attn. Treasurer, 26 Court St., Plymouth, MA 02360. Please make your check payable to No Place for Hate Committee. The awards are funded solely through private donations.

For more information about the No Place for Hate Committee, see its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PlymouthNPFH or its website, www.plymouthnoplacforhate.org.