



PLANTPURE
COMMUNITIES

PlantPureCommunities.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 11, 2017

For Information, contact:

Jody Kass, Executive Director, 704-412-4506 x101, JKass@PlantPureCommunities.org

PLANTPURE COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES 5 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

PlantPure Communities today announced the Group Leaders of five Pods who are the recipients of scholarships for the renowned Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate Program offered through the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies (CNS) and eCornell. These scholarships are being made available via a collaboration between PlantPure Communities (PPC) and CNS which is aimed at building the capacity of community leaders carrying out impactful activities in their neighborhoods via the PPC Pod Network. PPC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that works to build stronger, healthier, more sustainable communities through a wide range of research, policy and program activities and by working with local nonprofits, governments, businesses, and other health and community-based organizations. The PPC Pod Network emerged out of the 2015 *PlantPure Nation* film with the goal of creating and supporting a grassroots movement by empowering a network of independent local groups (Pods) and people to promote the benefits of a whole food, plant-based lifestyle. To date, there are over 460 groups across the globe with over 45,000 people involved in the Pod Network. Participation is free, and offers support and networking opportunities to everyone interested in learning, incorporating, advocating and practicing a whole food, plant-based lifestyle. These are independent groups of like-minded people, working together to spread the message of plant-based nutrition in their communities, as well as have fun and build friendships.

Five exemplary leaders were chosen to receive this scholarship due to the commendable work they are doing and the impactful community goals they are planning for 2018. “We are so thankful to CNS for their partnership and for allowing us to offer this exceptional educational resource to our on-the-ground Pod leaders who are bringing the science of plant-based nutrition to their communities,” said Jody Kass, PPC Executive Director. Through this partnership, PPC awarded a total of 20 scholarships in 2017. “CNS is pleased to support PPC’s efforts to strengthen the Pod Network by offering these educational scholarships to active community leaders helping to share the science-based nutrition and health message. There is so much confusing information out there. It is crucial that this information reaches everyone, and especially those who live in food deserts, low-income, and other underserved neighborhoods where food borne chronic diseases are rampant,” said Jenny Miller, CNS Executive Director.

The scholarship recipients represent a diverse group of local leaders who will be bringing this science-based nutrition education back to their communities in Colorado, Missouri, Upper Michigan, Oregon and Queensland, Australia. One of the award winners is fluent in Spanish, another is connected to the Chippewa Indians and a third has extensive experience working with children and schools. These skills and

relationships have put the award winners in unique positions to help communities who need the benefits of a plant-based lifestyle.

Monica Llorain

Monica Llorain was one of the first community leaders to start a pod after the Pod Network was launched in 2015. Her Pod, [STL Plant-Centered Living](#) in St Louis, Missouri, has maintained continuous momentum for two years. Pod activities have included potlucks, Farmer's Market visits, supporting local restaurants in offering plant-based menu items, skyping sessions with plant-based celebrities and cooking lessons. On being awarded the scholarship, Monica stated "I am super excited to be a recipient of the Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate scholarship. Through the knowledge I receive with this program, I hope to provide credible nutritional information to my community to empower people to take back their health and ultimately their lives." Her Pod, which started with 8 members is now [649 members strong](#). Monica's goal is to put together a symposium with well-known physicians in the plant-based world, and bring them to her community. Fluent in both English and Spanish, Monica's ability to work with diverse communities is greatly enhanced by these skills. Monica says, "I can give educated, science backed advice, through the education I receive through eCornell. I would love to sit down with our members and help them develop a plan with which they can achieve major positive health results through nutrition."

Katie Costa

After moving to Edwards, Colorado, aka Vail Valley, a couple of years ago, Katie realized that there were limited plant-based community resources available locally. With the help of her plant-based physician, she reached out to the local community and started the Vail Valley Plant Based Living Pod in August 2017, which has grown to 43 members by January 2018. Since its inception, the group has been active with regular monthly meetings and through the [PlantPure Pods website](#) and an active [Facebook community](#). Katie is especially passionate about the [PlantPure Communities Restaurant Campaign](#), and her Pod is planning to organize a Restaurant week in late 2018. Katie stated, "By taking this (Plant-based Nutrition Certificate) course, I will have gained more knowledge of the evidence base behind plant based nutrition and increase my confidence in talking to pod members, local restaurants and community members."

Sonia Drake

Sonia Drake has been a beacon of Plant-based living in Queensland, Australia. Not only has she been successfully running her [PlantPure Pod Plant Powered Brisbane](#) since April 2016, but she has also inspired other Pods in nearby communities. Her Pod organizes a variety of meet-ups and other events including potlucks, supporting local plant-based restaurants and education sessions with plant-based experts. The Pod's 153 members include teachers, nurses, health care practitioners, tradespeople, students, retirees, public servants, arts workers, business people and full time parents. Regarding using the knowledge gained for the Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate, Sonia says "The course would support these (Pod) goals and give me the opportunity to build on members' knowledge and confidence and better support our growing member base. I would also importantly use this education to further my work in the school sector. Resources supporting a plant based lifestyle in the Australian curriculum are sadly inadequate. I would use

the information obtained through the course to improve this situation by developing material to support classroom teachers and students.”

Janel Crooks

[The Lake Superior Pod](#) run by Pod leader Janel Crooks is one of the Northernmost Pods in the US, located in Michigan Upper Peninsula. Janel, who is connected to the Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, says, “Our remote community (Alger County, MI) is underserved and economically repressed (13% poverty). I am reaching out to the tribal health center in hopes of engaging them.” Janel is a passionate participant of the PPC Restaurant Campaign and the future goals of her Pod include the Tribal Health Center Outreach project, combining whole foods plant based no oil education and cooking demos, community education, movies and cooking demos in partnership with several local organizations. Janel, who participated in the Pilot testing phase of the Restaurant Campaign plans to invite Pods scattered in Michigan and Wisconsin to support the Restaurant Campaign in Munising while visiting the national parks and forests, for which Munising is famous. On being awarded the scholarship, Janel states “Growing up on a farm, I saw firsthand the health and land stewardship benefits of organic gardening. Forty years later, I applied for the scholarship in hopes of satisfying an ongoing fascination with both the scientific rationale for the whole food plant-based diet and the political/social/economic factors that prop up both the standard American diet and chemical agriculture. Once armed with solid knowledge of the Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate Program's curriculum, I look forward to confidently sharing its messages with our local plant-based potluck group and through a variety of other programs and projects in Alger County.”

Fran Batzer

Fran Batzer is a certified Integrative Nutrition Holistic Health Coach and a Plant-Based Chef in Medford, Oregon. Through the [Plant-based Medford](#) Pod, Fran organizes local events, including potlucks with talks by plant-based doctors, plant-based cooking lessons and has influenced the local co-op cafe to have about one-third plant-based options. Fran plans to use the knowledge gained from this scholarship to deepen engagement of her Pod on the scientific basis of the WFPB diet. Fran said, “I love teaching about the importance of living a plant-based lifestyle. How eating a clean diet without processed flours, salt, oils, and sugars can be easy with a bit of pre-planning. How eating plant-based does not need to be fancy or complicated. I believe completing this plant-based nutrition certification will add to my credentials and credibility, in addition, help me be better prepared to engage in productive conversations.” Future goals of the Plant-based Medford Pod include offering more strategies to transition to plant-based lifestyle, touring local sanctuaries and providing tools on how to reach out to friends and family to join Pod meetings.

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