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## **PLANTPURE COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES 5 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

PlantPure Communities today announced the five Pod leaders 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, and eligibility was targeted to build 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.

Application eligibility for the second round of scholarships was limited to Group Leaders of Pods that are actively participating in the PlantPure Communities Pod Network. A total of 28 applications were received, out of which 5 exemplary leaders were chosen to receive this scholarship due to the extraordinary work they are doing and plan to do in their communities.

“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. The Pod Network was designed to create and support a grassroots movement by empowering a network of independent local groups and people working to promote the benefits of a whole food, plant-based (WFPB) lifestyle. Over 40,000 people participate in the global PlantPure Communities Pod Network.

“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 will be bringing this science-based nutrition education back to their communities in San Diego, California; Long Island, New York; Lubbock, Texas; Miami, Florida; and Wellington, New Zealand. Some of the scholarship winners are fluent in Spanish and French, which strengthens their ability to work with diverse and minority communities.

Karla Vargas, from Lubbock, Texas, has a strong background in social work, having worked with a homeless shelter in San Francisco before moving to Lubbock. Karla is fluent in Spanish and is passionate about working with “communities of color, who statistically suffer the most from poor nutrition,” said Karla. She is working to provide a free plant-based education series to local underserved communities and has found support from local organizations like the Lubbock Health Ministry. Her group, Hub City Veg, is part of the PlantPure Pod Network and is focused on creating partnerships with local businesses to provide more resources to the local community. Karla said, “I have wanted to do this program for a long time now, but have not been able to do so due to financial constraints. I see this scholarship as an investment in my community. Thank you PlantPure, CNS, and eCornell for believing in Lubbock, Texas! We will not let you down.”

Youcef Banouni from Wellington, New Zealand, is a plant-based pioneer, not only supporting and propagating the plant-based movement but he is also an activist blogger and writer. He manages an active Facebook group, Whole Foods Plant Based Kiwis, which is also the name of his PlantPure Pod, with 166 members. Youcef organizes bi-monthly potlucks and has been solicited by media to answer questions on plant-based health. In Youcef’s words, he hopes to use the knowledge gained through the CNS certificate “to effectively reach a large audience with accurate WFPB education, resting on solid credentials.” Youcef said, “I applied for the scholarship to Cornell University’s Plant-Based Nutrition Certification to gain further knowledge and qualifications in plant-based nutrition and health. These will be key to reach out more effectively. This means better helping people to achieve more sustainable health and wellbeing, through a Whole Food Plant-Based dietary lifestyle.”

Mitch Castell from Long Island, New York, has been a very active Pod Leader. Mitch and his Long Island Pod have had a strong partnership with PlantPure Communities, organizing the first PlantPure Communities Pod event. The Long Island Pod holds regular events and one of their last events--Dinner with the Doctor--was featured in a PlantPure Communities [Pod news story](#). In Mitch’s words: “I applied for the Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate Program to better understand the science behind plant based nutrition and how it may be able to prevent, stabilize and in some cases reverse chronic diseases. I expect to use the information learned to help others understand the overall benefits of eating whole foods plant based, for our health, for the environment and for the animals. I also hope to be able to answer questions with fact-based research.”

Estella Delgado from Miami, Florida, is an expert on plant-based living, running the 3000+ member group, Earthsave, which is part of the PlantPure Pod Network. Estella, together with the leadership team of the Earthsave Pod, holds regular events like Vegan Buffet-Lecture+ and GoVegan Potluck-Demo-Presentation+, in addition to plant-based movie screenings and plant-based training programs. She stated, “I am passionate about plant-based nutrition. Since 2003 I have studied, practiced and experimented, but most importantly I have taught and shared with others. This Certificate Program will

add to my knowledge and enable me to expand the scientific and technical aspects of teaching, coaching and practicing as a Raw Food Chef.”

Tracy Childs started the PlantDiego Pod in San Diego, California, spurred by the *PlantPure Nation* film soon after it was released. Tracy has proven to be a highly effective Pod leader, having organized 91 events in the past couple of years, ranging from potlucks to educational events to movie screenings. Tracy has created a strong foundation for her Pod by generating 8 active team leaders over time. On being awarded the scholarship, Tracy stated, “Our local PlantDiego leadership group is very committed to helping solve food injustice in our community, as well as spreading the idea of plant based nutrition to those who would not otherwise hear it. Having a group leader who is certified in plant-based nutrition with increased knowledge and confidence in the facts supporting the research via the course will be paramount helping us to connect with other leaders within our community.”

Through a continuing partnership with the Center for Nutrition Studies, PPC expects to offer another scholarship opportunity in November 2017. The timeframe and application guidelines for the third and last scholarship round of 2017 will be open to all Group Leaders who are leading Pods as of September 15, 2017. Details will be announced in early November on PPC’s website and to those registered on PPC’s website: [www.plantpurepods.com](http://www.plantpurepods.com)

**IMPORTANT!!** This Scholarship Opportunity is administered exclusively by PlantPure Communities. Any questions about this scholarship opportunity should be directed to PPC at: [info@plantpurecommunities.org](mailto:info@plantpurecommunities.org). For general information about the certificate program (not the scholarship), go to the CNS website at: [www.nutritionstudies.org/courses/plant-based-nutrition/](http://www.nutritionstudies.org/courses/plant-based-nutrition/)