



PLANTPURE
COMMUNITIES, INC.

PlantPureCommunities.org

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PLANTPURE COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES 10 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

First round of scholarships for 2019

The nonprofit PlantPure Communities (PPC) today announced that ten leaders of Pods (independent local groups connected to the PPC Pod Network) are the newest 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 PPC and CNS. The scholarships are 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. Pods are comprised of like-minded people, working together to share the life-saving nutrition research that shows that a whole-food, plant-based diet is optimal for humans. To date, there are over 200,000 people involved in the PPC Pod Network. Participation is free, and offers support and networking opportunities to everyone interested in learning, advocating, and practicing a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle.

Ten 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 2019/20. “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. “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 nutrition-related chronic diseases are rampant,” said Jenny Miller, CNS Executive Director.

The scholarship recipients represent a diverse group of local leaders who will be bringing evidence-based nutrition education back to their communities in five countries: India, United Kingdom, Canada (British Columbia, Manitoba), New Zealand, and the United States (Ohio, Oregon, Illinois, New York, Georgia). One of the award winners is fluent in Spanish and another in Hindi. Meet our scholarship recipients:

Abigail Oberla

Abigail took over the leadership for the [Plantastic Columbus Pod](#), located in Columbus, Ohio, in September 2018. Abigail has hosted events every month and participation has growth from 80 people to almost 200. Some of Plantastic Columbus

events include discussion-based dinners at local plant-based restaurants, plant-based potlucks, cooking demos, and documentary screenings. After receiving a generous donation of fruit and vegetable seeds from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company via PPC's Pod Support Program to encourage growing fresh food, Plantastic Columbus set up a gardening project with a local organization and urban farm. Abigail stated, "I applied for this scholarship because I desire to undergo an educational program - more formal than my own study and conference attendance - focused on the evidence supporting whole food plant-based nutrition. I believe this course will beneficially enhance my practice as a family nurse practitioner, by providing me with the established research and best techniques for helping my patients - when ready - to adopt this lifestyle. Furthermore, I am confident that this course will prepare me to build focused, informative talks and offer other educational programs to the members of our Plantastic Columbus Pod, as well as the community at large. There is incredible potential for the number of people we may be able to reach and impact with this information! Thank you so much for this opportunity."

Ahava Dearaza

Ahava is the Group Leader for the [Back to Eden Pod](#), a new Pod located in Wellington, New Zealand. Back to Eden is thriving with 3-5 monthly events, some of which include a nice-cream social, documentary screening, health walk, plant-based potlucks, and a community healthy drive. She has had approximately 20-30 people attend the smaller events and almost 200 attend a large health talk. Ahava stated, "T. Colin Campbell is a truly inspiring difference maker! After reading his books - The China Study, Whole, and The Low Carb Fraud - I yearned to learn more. I wanted to take in whatever I could from his wealth of experience and knowledge. When I first heard of the eCornell course on whole food, plant-based nutrition, I immediately got excited about the opportunity it would offer to expand my understanding of nutrition. I believed that it would equip me with the tools to also become a difference maker in my community. Now, I am so grateful to PlantPure Communities for making this incredible learning opportunity available to me through this scholarship. I look forward to everything I will learn and what I can share with the people in my community."

Cindy Miller

Cindy is the Group Leader of the [Plant Based Gresham Pod](#), located in Gresham, Oregon. This Pod has participated in the PPC Restaurant Campaign and currently organizes a community garden with seeds donated from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company via PPC's Pod Support Program to encourage growing fresh food. Pod members help by participating in the garden one hour each week and the excess produce is donated to a Food Bank. In addition, Cindy hosts a monthly Pod meeting and she welcomes new Pod members by giving out newcomer care packages with resources to help them succeed with their whole food, plant-based diet. Upon receiving the scholarship Cindy stated, "I want to see people improve their health outcomes to live the physically, mentally and emotionally whole lives they were designed to live."

Prateek Barbora

Prateek is the Group Leader of the [Fitness Incorporated Pod](#), located in Guwahati, India. As an influential leader in India, Prateek has been on a mission to help his country and educate them about whole food, plant-based eating. Besides Pod meetings, Prateek has been regularly conducting lectures and started a live streaming nutrition channel. In January 2019, Fitness Incorporated Pod awarded the first restaurant in India, Snack Mafia, with the PPC Restaurant Campaign certificate. In Prateek's words, "I applied for the scholarship because I wanted strong, science backed information to encourage whole food, plant-based living. There is a lot of misinformation out in the world about nutrition, what would be better than to get a certification from the direct source from where this plant-based movement began? I know that I will get the best science-based facts from this course and plan to educate bodybuilders and fitness conscious people who are ill-informed about nutrition. I did a physique transformation of myself with plant based nutrition to prove it to them."

Jennie Collinge

Jennie is the Group Leader of the [Health Rise Pod](#), located in Sutton Coldfield, United Kingdom. Jennie set up this Pod in September 2018 and has hosted monthly meetings ever since. The PPC Restaurant Campaign has become a focus of the Pod, and they are currently talking to managers and working to eliminate oil from recipes. Jennie stated, "I applied for the scholarship so I would have more confidence and evidence based knowledge to support and educate others about the amazing benefits of a WFPB diet. Since becoming involved with PlantPure Communities and setting up our Pod, it has become my life passion to empower and support others about this way of living within my work as a Holistic Health Practitioner and also with family and friends."

Vanessa Anderson

Vanessa is the Group Leader of the [Plant Empowered Burnaby and Tri Cities Pod](#), located in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. Vanessa started her Pod in 2016 after watching *PlantPure Nation*. Ever since she has been helping people transition to a whole food, plant-based diet and making connections in her community. Upon receiving the scholarship, Vanessa said, "I am grateful for the opportunity to take the eCornell Plant Based Certificate course. As a Pod leader I often get asked questions about the whole food, plant-based lifestyle. I have been able to answer to the best of my own knowledge from personal research I have done, but I wasn't as confident as I would like to be. I am the type of person when I find something I am passionate about, I dive right in and try to learn all I can. I became a Pod leader in 2016 and I am still so fascinated by how the WFPB lifestyle can help so many problems we face. After completing the course I expect to have the confidence backed by my certificate to help others in my community. I love to promote this lifestyle and I am so excited to take this course. I couldn't be happier!"

Laura Platt

Laura is the co-Group Leader for the [Plant-Based Living Winnipeg Pod](#), located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Laura and her co-leader Michelle Tree host monthly potlucks and attend other events such as the Winnipeg Vegfest. The age range of the Pod members at their meetings is between 6-77 years old, and they are looking for a new venue as they outgrew their present location. Plant-Based Winnipeg awarded the first restaurant in Canada, Circle Kitchen, with the PPC Restaurant Campaign certificate and they are actively reaching out to more restaurants. Upon receiving the scholarship, Laura stated, "They say that 'Knowledge is Power,' I feel that 'Applied Knowledge' is far more powerful! I strongly believe that everyone would truly appreciate knowing about the many benefits of a whole food, plant-based lifestyle. Most would take the overwhelming evidence into consideration, and apply it in their own lives as I have. I am thrilled to be part of this amazing course so I can offer what I will learn to so many others that want to make a difference in their health, the planet, and for the animals. When I apply my newfound knowledge, so many will benefit around me, including my local community, friends, family, our PlantPure Communities Pod group, online following and of course, myself."

Emma Rodriguez

Emma is the Group Leader for two Pods, [Plant Based Chicago](#) and [Plant Based Chicago Español](#), both located in Chicago, Illinois. Plant Based Chicago Español was created with the Latino community in mind, for Spanish speakers to have a venue of support and resources in Spanish. Since the start of both Pods in 2018, they have grown to over 600 members. In addition to hosting potlucks and events at restaurants, Emma has led friendly 10-day weight loss challenges, twice a month, against other Pods in the PlantPure Communities Pod Network. Emma's Pod also participates in the PPC Restaurant Campaign. Emma stated, "I applied for this scholarship to develop my understanding of WFPB nutrition, grounded in research. This is important to me since my mission as an educator is to share information and empower learners of all ages."

As a Pod leader, this training will allow me to share this knowledge with group members and my community, in a thoughtful manner.”

Ron Ashker

Ron is the co-Group Leader for [WNY Plant-Based Community](#), located in Niagara Falls, New York. Ron has made his own incredible health transformation and shares his story when he can: While waiting for a triple coronary bypass surgery, his children learned that heart disease can be halted and reversed by a whole food, plant-based diet. In Ron’s own words, “I left that hospital (before the surgery) 2 years and 2 months ago and began my own personal study on the issue of diet and health, reading books by Drs. Ornish, Esselstyn, McDougal, Campbell and several others and began immediately eating a whole food, plant-based diet. I lost 30 pounds effortlessly, got off all meds for blood pressure and cholesterol and began feeling much better and with more energy than I’d had in a long time. I became convinced that more people needed to know much more about this. I encountered more resistance and skepticism than I anticipated but was able to convince several acquaintances to join me in this lifestyle. I have very much enjoyed watching them change their lives for the better with this way of eating. I have often thought that my testimony and advice would be taken more seriously by more people if I had a certificate or degree in nutrition or food science. I will very much love to share the knowledge and information that I learn [from the Plant Based Nutrition Certificate Program] with as many people as I can. In fact, I feel that I have been given a new ‘lease on life’ and believe wholeheartedly that God has also given me a new purpose in this life --- to share this knowledge freely and with all who will listen, so that they, too, can make better food choices based on accurate knowledge and live a longer, healthier, and more vibrant life.”

Stacey Ware

Stacey is the Group Leader for [WellnessAce Pod](#), a new Pod in Roswell, Georgia. Stacey and her Pod have been participating in the PPC Restaurant Campaign and have helped the restaurant, Kale Me Crazy, receive their certificate with three more restaurants on the way. Stacey stated, “I applied for this scholarship because I wanted to take this course since I heard about it years ago but haven't been able to afford it. I want to learn more about the benefits of plant-based eating and understand it so fully that I can teach it to others in my family, community and Pod. I will pass on what I learn to make eating WFPB effortless to them and others. I also feel that it will help me to figure out what work I want to do to give back to the world – probably something to do with preventative nutrition and reversing disease with food.”