



**PLANTPURE**  
COMMUNITIES, INC.

[PlantPureCommunities.org](http://PlantPureCommunities.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 9, 2020

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## **PLANTPURE COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES 9 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS** **First round of scholarships for 2020**

The nonprofit PlantPure Communities (PPC) today announced that nine 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 250,000 people and hundreds of Pods involved in the PPC Pod Network (in 29 countries). Participation is free, and offers support and networking opportunities to everyone interested in learning, advocating, and practicing a whole food, plant-based lifestyle.

Nine 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 2020. “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, including two recipients who are working with at-risk communities in Houston and Indiana, and another who supports the large Spanish speaking community in Queens, New York. We have one recipient from Australia and the rest are from the United States (Indiana, Utah, Florida, Texas, California, and New York). Meet our scholarship recipients (please note that many of the usual Pod activities described below have been impacted by or adjusted due the COVID-19 pandemic):

### **Michael Nelson**

Michael is the Group Leader for the [Plant Empowered Redding Pod](#), located in Redding, California. Michael began this Pod in 2016 and has been having meetings each month ever since! His meetings first started out as small gatherings with WFPB support. Now they have transitioned to include potlucks, video screenings (helped fill three theaters for “The Game Changers”), cooking demos, and lectures. In Michael’s dental practice of 39 years he focuses on empowering his patients to control their health. Every year he speaks at dental and dental hygiene conventions. Upon receiving the scholarship Michael stated, “I aspire to enjoy a lifetime of vibrant health and hope to inspire family and friends to see the value of a health promoting, whole food, plant-based diet.”

### **Marta Gomez-Bolaños**

Marta is a co-leader for [Plant Powered Metro New York- Queens Pod](#) (PPMNY) and the Latino Community Organizer, located in Queens, New York. As a Latino Community Organizer she is working to support Latinos and bring WFPB nutrition in Spanish to the metropolitan New York area. Marta says that since Spanish resources on WFPB nutrition are very few and that the bulk of information on the web is in English, many Spanish speakers are discouraged to even try the lifestyle. She states “it is my biggest hope that studying this course will prepare me as a more confident speaker, provide me with authenticity, and help me support Latinos who are interested in improving their health without encountering a language barrier. This good-health message should reach every culture as nature intended it!” Upon receiving the scholarship she also stated, “I decided to study the Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate Program to expand, strengthen, and validate my science-based knowledge with the purpose of taking this good-health message to the Latino community - which is currently lacking the resources. I expect to become a reliable support and strong guidance for the community.”

### **Kelly Hofferth**

Kelly is the Group Leader of [VegEDU Pod](#), located in South Bend, Indiana. This Pod formed out of the Michiana VegFest’s community outreach program, Michiana VegEDU, which received a grant from their local hospital community branch to educate at-risk communities and the general population on the benefits of plant-based diet and lifestyle outside of their annual VegFest event. Last year, VegEDU started Meatless Monday programs with several at-risk community partners, serving over 200 people. In addition, Kelly’s Pod also hosted the Kind Chef Series, which is a free four-session education program that addresses the most commonly asked questions about the plant-based diet. When asked why she applied for the scholarship opportunity, Kelly stated, “...to gain the most valuable, current information on plant-based eating. With this knowledge I will be best prepared to serve as a resource for my community through our non-profit Michiana VegEDU.”

### **Robyn Chuter**

Robyn is the Group Leader for the [Plant Powered Gold Coast Pod](#), located in Gold Coast, Australia. She founded the Pod in January 2019 in order to provide social and educational support for people who are already eating, or would like to adopt, a whole food, plant-based diet in her community. Since January 2019, Robyn has been consistent with monthly meetings which include potlucks, a visit to an organic farm, documentary screenings, educational presentations, and hikes. In

addition, she is working with the Group Leaders of Plant Powered Brisbane and Plant Powered Boonah to host a seminar. Robyn stated, “I applied for the scholarship because I’m deeply committed to spreading the message about whole food, plant-based nutrition to my Pod and the broader community. The better informed I am, the greater the positive impact I will be able to have.”

### **Janelle Dunn**

Janelle is the Group Leader for the [Kamas Valley Thrive Pod](#), located in Kamas, Utah. Her Pod gets together once a month for a plant-based potluck to which she also invites a local speaker to cover the benefits of a plant-based diet. These events bring 25 to 45 people in their small town. In addition, Kamas Valley Thrive is participating in the PPC Restaurant Campaign and is planning an event with a local WFPB physician to speak to the students at a local school district (both to resume once the pandemic risks subside). Janelle stated, “I am excited to take the eCornell course. I am passionate about the importance and countless benefits of eating a whole food plant based diet.. I would like to use this education to share the healthful message with the world.”

### **Tanya Cleary**

Tanya is the Group Leader for the [Plant-Based in Paradise Pod](#), located in Key Largo, Florida. After being involved in an online Facebook WFPB group, “McDougall Friends” (she is now an admin of this group which has over 40,000 members), Tanya decided to start a Pod in her small community to spread the word about plant-based eating and have supportive gatherings. Upon receiving the scholarship, Tanya stated, “I hope to reinforce my knowledge of a whole food plant-based diet so that I can help others in my community and enjoy the benefits of better health.”

### **Jackie Reiter**

Jackie is the Group Leader for the [S.O.S. Raw Pod](#), located in West Palm Beach, Florida. Her Pod was holding weekly events which include mason jar salad parties, farm tours, and other educational opportunities which drew 10-25 people at most events, and they have taken steps to participate in the Restaurant Campaign. Jackie applied for the scholarship so that she can make a difference, “Inspiring healthy living around the world means learning new methods, techniques and ideas to more effectively assist as many people as possible realize their own individual and unique health potential. Listening to the needs of others, providing resources for them and providing community support to help individuals through the journey of whole body wellness on a plant-based holistic level is important. One simple change at a time is how we start this journey and I believe we all have the potential to change. You are not your illness.”

### **Robin Phillips**

Robin is the Group Leader for the [Live Plant STRONG Central Florida Pod](#), located in Groveland, Florida. Prior to starting her own Pod in Groveland, FL Robin was driving an hour each way to attend the Pod meetings hosted by the closest Pod. Robin stated, “The Certificate in Plant Based Nutrition is the icing for my plant based cake. The knowledge I receive through this instruction will give me the expertise I need to reach people on a more technical level.” Upon receiving the scholarship she also said, “I am a Pod leader for the Live PlantSTRONG Central Florida. My passion is connecting people and food. Having a degree in culinary arts and trained classically in cooking has shown me that connection to people is easiest through food. While food is a connection, sometimes the food choices are the wrong connection. Having been a plant-based chef and feeling so many health results from food changes, I wanted to share. Working as a Pod leader for LivePlantSTRONG Central Florida, I feel the amazing connection to helping people and changing their lives, as I say, ‘one plate at a time.’”

## **Susan Marsh**

Susan is the co-leader for the [Harmony N Houston Pod](#), located in Houston, Texas. She and her husband Kent started the Pod in September 2019 with a kickoff event that included a personal welcome and Q & A by Nelson Campbell. One Pod project currently underway involves working with the Houston Ind. School District to offer better food choices, including plant-based meals. Another outreach project they have planned is working with at-risk communities to demonstrate how to grow their own food. Susan stated, "My healing journey began in 2016 with an unexpected turn in March of 2017. Because I was in good general health and knew my body, I was spared a fatal heart attack from a 95% blocked LAD. I did have a stent placed but today, my heart disease has been reversed through nutrition. My take away from study, research and personal experience is that if you give your body proper nutrition, the body can and will heal itself. My passion is to continue to tell my story and gently guide others from where they are to a healthier lifestyle. I applied for the scholarship to arm myself with increased scientific knowledge so that I will be more credible to those who are seeking support along the way. I plan to share my new knowledge with our Harmony N Houston Pod and other groups requesting talks on health and nutrition."