



**PLANTPURE**  
COMMUNITIES, INC.

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

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## PLANTPURE COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES 9 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

### Second round of scholarships for 2020

The nonprofit PlantPure Communities (PPC) announced today 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 comprise 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 32 countries). Participation in a Pod is free and offers support and networking opportunities to those interested in learning about, 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 2021. “We are grateful to CNS for their ongoing partnership with PPC, and for the scholarships they provide so that we can offer this exceptional educational resource to our on-the-ground Pod leaders who bring the science of plant-based nutrition to their communities,” said Caroline Dyar, 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 group of local leaders who will be bringing evidence-based nutrition education back to their communities. All of the recipients from this round are from the United States (Maryland, California, Utah, Missouri, Georgia, Minnesota, Nevada, and Texas). 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):

### **Beth Love**

Beth is the Group Leader for [Eat for the Earth Santa Cruz](#), located in Santa Cruz, California. Her Pod has been extremely active and some of their accomplishments include: the first ever Santa Cruz VegFest which served over 450 free plant-based meals; a successful Restaurant Campaign involving nine restaurants; seven free dinner parties with presentations; over 570 people signed up to their mailing list; and the collection of 800+ signatures to request that their county change food policies. Eat for the Earth Santa Cruz pivoted quickly with the onset of COVID-19, hosting two webinars during Earth Week (2020) and offering online whole food, plant-based food preparation classes. Upon receiving the scholarship, Beth stated, “I have had an interest in nutrition since the late 1960s. My mother was learning about natural foods and began teaching me and my siblings interesting facts. During my teens, I began reading Prevention magazine and books like *Diet for a Small Planet* and *Back to Eden*. My interest in and informal study of nutrition continued into adulthood, and has increased in the last five years as I have begun supporting people in transitioning to a whole foods, plant-based lifestyle. Although I know a lot about nutrition, I lack formal training. I applied for the scholarship to address this gap. I trust that my engagement with the course will increase my knowledge and my capacity to articulate nutrition principles, thereby making me more effective in my advocacy work. Additionally, having the certificate will provide additional credibility that will help me to reach more people. This will further amplify the crucial message that a whole foods, plant-based diet is good for human health, good for the Earth, and good for all Lifekind, and will allow me to support more people to make life-saving changes to their diets. I am deeply grateful to PlantPure Communities for this opportunity!”

### **Juliette Arnold**

Juliette is the Group Leader for the [Biggest Little Plant Pod](#), located in Reno, Nevada. Before the onset of COVID-19, her Pod was meeting monthly. After, they have been hosting monthly Zoom meetings and have a number of speakers lined up for future meetings. Some of the speakers include local farmers and plant-based doctors and the themes include cooking demos and documentary screenings. The Biggest Little Plant Pod created their own website, which provides visitors with lots of resources and information. Juliette stated, “I applied for this scholarship in order to truly comprehend the value of living a whole food, plant-based lifestyle. Being plant-based for some time, I already know what I am eating matters and now I’ll have a deeper understanding and confidence that I am on the right path. I look forward to sharing what I learn with my family, friends and community.”

### **Elaine Epstein**

Elaine is the Group Leader for the [St. Louis Plant-Centered Living Pod](#), located in St. Louis, Missouri. Until her recent appointment as Pod leader, she was an active member and volunteer for the Pod. Before COVID-19, St. Louis Plant-Centered Living Pod held a potluck every other month, attended the St. Louis VegFest and Earth Day, hosted a book club every other month, and had periodic Skype sessions with whole food, plant-based food bloggers and chefs. Elaine stated, “Receiving the scholarship provides me with the opportunity to pursue my goal and passion to educate others through fellowship within the community on the importance of a whole food, plant-based lifestyle and the healing impact this has on our physical and emotional well-being.”

### **Andreina Troncoso**

Andreina is the Group Leader for [Purposely Plant-Based](#), located in Ellicott City, Maryland. Her Pod is relatively new and is specifically for women of all ages, regardless of where they are in their journey, who want to take charge of their own and their family's health. This Pod will empower women and give them confidence in their food choices. Andreina stated, "My ultimate goal is to help people see that their health is their only true wealth. A wealth that we need to nurture, take care of, invest in, pass on to our children and their children, and to be the best version of ourselves!" Upon receiving the scholarship she also said, "I applied for the scholarship because we deserve to know the truth about the power and impact our food choices have on our health and our planet. This certification will give me credibility to accomplish that goal. With the information that I will learn through this course, I plan to be a loud voice in my family, my neighborhood, my local community, and my family and friends across the world, for why a whole food, plant-based lifestyle is the best way to prevent and revert diseases, and why a plant-based lifestyle is the optimal and only way of taking charge of our health, the planet, and the animals. I plan to continue to grow a community of women, mothers, bosses in their homes, and businesses who want to take care of their families and bring a healthy lifestyle to their significant others, children, friends and families through a plant-based diet. This group will serve as a Pod where we, as women and mothers, connect with each other, take charge of our health, and learn the steps for practical application in our lives."

### **Lily Sparks**

Lily is the Group Leader for the [Davis Weber Thrive](#) Pod, located in Clinton, Utah. The Pod meets monthly for a potluck and occasionally hosts a special speaker, such as a plant-based physician or an author of a plant-based book. In addition, Lily offers whole food, plant-based cooking classes and cooking demonstrations on YouTube. "I applied for the scholarship so I could learn more and give more. I teach cooking classes in order to help others in their learning curve to a whole food, plant-based lifestyle. Giving people nutrition information during the cooking lesson is strengthening their resolve, I hope. So many people trying to convert to a whole food, plant-based diet have to learn all new recipes and that is daunting for a lot of people. I do lectures to groups and at conferences and what I will learn from the course will allow me to teach more effectively and inspire others."

### **Celeste Knoff**

Celeste is the Co-Group Leader for [East Side Evolution](#), located in Cottage Grove, Minnesota. Her Pod started in April 2020 and some of their virtual monthly meeting topics have been: Meet, Greet and Planning; What Exactly IS WFPB?; and Quick & Easy 5-Minute Vegan Meals. Once the Pod will be able to meet in-person, Celeste plans to have potlucks, cooking classes, presentations/speakers, discussion groups on books/movies, video screenings, field trips, service activities, and topic-focused meetings. Upon receiving the scholarship, Celeste stated, "I have been plant-based for 34 years but had become complacent in my efforts to learn more about this lifestyle. After meeting members of a local PlantPure Communities Pod at a VegFest (Plant Based Living TC), I soon realized there was still a lot for me to learn. I started digging in, loved all the new information I was finding, and soon I became a Co-Leader of a new pod, East Side Evolution. The more I read, the more videos and movies I watched, and the more podcasts I listened to, the more I realized that there was new and fascinating information out there. I also realized that in order to be an effective leader and mentor for others seeking information on a whole food, plant-based lifestyle, I needed a solid, scientific, evidence-based framework from which I could share. I heard about the Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate course and knew it was perfect for me. My goals for the class are twofold: 1) to provide credibility to the information I share among my Pod members, family and friends, so that it helps promote a WFPB lifestyle; and 2) to reinforce my knowledge and understanding of the science and physiology behind why a plant-based diet is better for an individual, animals, and the planet. Ultimately, my plan for what to do with the information I learn from the course is to share it with others."

### **Sheryl McDonald**

Sheryl is the Co-Group Leader for the [Georgia Living Well Group](#), located in Adairsville, Georgia. Her Pod meets monthly, on the second Tuesday of each month. When COVID-19 restrictions took place, their meetings moved to Zoom and ever since they haven't missed a month together. Although they miss their potlucks and recipe sharing, they still get to see and inspire each other. Sheryl stated, "I applied for the nutrition scholarship because I am passionate about whole food, plant-based eating, and wanted to learn more about the nutrition and health benefits gained from a plant-based program. As Co-Group Leader of the Georgia Living Well Pod, I feel that the knowledge I gain from the course will help me be a better resource to my Northwest Georgia Pod members and community."

### **Babette Coats**

Babette is the Co-Group Leader for [Get Healthy San Antonio Pod](#), located in San Antonio, Texas. The group was formed by Ken & Matilda Kanagaki and Charlotte Martin. Get Healthy San Antonio held its first meeting in January 2016 and meets once a month. Babette attended that first meeting and over time took the lead on social media and information liaison between PPC and the Pod. Through the generous donation of local organizers, Get Healthy San Antonio participated in San Antonio's first VegFest in August 2019. They handed out free seeds, explained the similarities and differences of a vegan and whole food, plant-based diet, and had material from PPC and other sources to help in our mission. Upon receiving the scholarship, Babette stated, "This certificate will give me the knowledge base that is the gold standard in the plant-based community. Not only will I know what to say, I will have the credential to back up my words. Secondly, as I learn more about the whole food, plant-based lifestyle, I will have more confidence to speak what I know and become a stronger and better representative of our movement."

### **Charles Brown**

Charles is the Group Leader for the [Clean Food Connection Pod](#), located in Saint Francis, Kansas. He started his Pod over a year ago in a small town of only 1,000 people. Charles mostly connects with his Pod Members through his YouTube page. Charles stated, "I applied because I am always anxious to learn more about plant-based nutrition, as it has saved my life. I live in an agricultural place where farming spray has just about killed me and has devastated my life, my children, my pets, everything. I hope to find a new piece of land to put in an underground greenhouse to grow nutritional food year-round and have a camp there to teach people how to eat, grow and cook plants. I am so excited to learn more about plant-based nutrition so that I can help people who are nutritionally starving."