



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Amanda Vance



District 1

Citizenship: United States

Amanda Vance is a graduate of Bow High School who is actively engaged in her community. She has proudly served as class treasurer for four years, overseeing the planning and execution of fundraisers for class activities and volunteer service events. Amanda was also a four-year member of the school's orchestra, where she played the viola. Additionally, she was involved in her school's National Honor Society, having accumulated 100 volunteer hours. She also held the position of president in her community's First Robotics Team's 4-H Club, managing all club requirements and organizing the team's participation in First Robotics competitions. Amanda has also led numerous outreach events in her community, including the 4-H Fair in Hopkinton, New Hampshire, a four-day event attended by approximately 60,000 people.

Amanda passionately advocates for women's equal access to STEM-related education, activities and career opportunities. In her robotics club, she created an environment where every voice is heard without prejudices or biases. She made a program through the Bow Community Center to teach STEM to elementary-aged kids in her community, ensuring a nurturing place where no one, especially girls, was excluded.

Looking ahead, Amanda will attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where she will study mechanical engineering. She desires to one day have a rewarding career as a NASA engineer. Additionally, she hopes to continue her community involvement by mentoring young women who want to pursue a STEM career.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee

# Mary Vitale



### District 2

### Citizenship: United States

Mary Vitale recently graduated as a salutatorian at Southern Cayuga High School and was involved in various extracurriculars. Some of these include being a part of the class office, holding the position of class president for four consecutive years, being an active member of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and serving in various elected positions, including secretary and president. She has also participated in the National Honor Society, leadership club and student council. In addition to these clubs, Mary also participated in varsity soccer for all four years of high school and varsity tennis, where she was named team captain numerous times. In addition to her extracurriculars, she has worked tirelessly toward her academics.

Mary has always found it important for young women to get involved in anything and everything their communities offer. A member of the non-partisan civics opportunity First Amendment First Vote, she helped advocate for women's involvement in politics and public affairs. She has also discussed many issues with local female politicians from her community. She hopes to inspire younger women to get involved and make the changes they wish to see in their communities and the world.

This fall, Mary will attend Cornell University, majoring in industrial and labor relations. She is looking forward to studying the relationships present within the workplace. She hopes to help work toward a future of fairness and equality in business and beyond.



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Public Affairs Awardee

# Katie Mondry



District 3

Citizenship: United States

Katie Mondry is a Walt Whitman High School graduate pursuing a career in the arts. She was an executive lead editor and illustrator of her yearbook committee, a senior editor of the Xanadu Literary Magazine and is a published poet.

Throughout high school, Katie advocated for issues within her community. Through the Natural Helpers organization, she encouraged a thoughtful approach to mental health awareness and promoted annual fundraisers for her community's local food share. She is also a founding member of the Girls Empowerment Movement (GEM), which aims to "empower women and girls to reach their full potential worldwide" and has helped promote self-defense and healthy relationships. Through GEM, Katie introduced a local crayon recycling program to support the Crayon Initiative. Her introduction has led to more than 100 pounds of crayons being recycled and donated to children's hospitals.

Finding it unfair that girls were forced to wear white, her school's accent color, Katie sought to change her school's policy on gendered graduation gowns, which became her proudest achievement. She initially raised the issue in her second year but was declined due to "tradition." However, she reignited her pursuit the following year and through a bumpy and uncertain road, Katie successfully changed the policy. Now, students can choose their gown's color, allowing future classes to openly and freely wear the gown they feel most confident in, regardless of gender.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Azka Siddiqui



**District 4**

**Citizenship: Canada**

Azka Siddiqui has always strived to be involved in her community through endeavors, seeking to build meaningful connections and using her voice to advocate for the causes she believes in. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Azka organized numerous fundraising events as an executive with non-profit organizations, generating more than CA\$5,000 for the Himalayan Cataract Foundation and youth-led organizations such as Eyes On Youth. As vice president of Focus Youth, she hosted a university student panel event and led a donation drive for underserved Canadian students.

Azka is the editor-in-chief of her school's newspaper where she organized a workshop with a National Youth Poet Laureate, published student-written articles and promoted journalism and community building within her school.

Deeply passionate about causes such as cancer and autism awareness, children's rights and equality for girls, Azka holds positions with several non-profit organizations, including the Canadian Cancer Society, Autism Speaks Canada and Plan International Canada. She also organizes events that engage students and teachers in climate education and action. Azka volunteers more than 100 hours with organizations like CAGIS, Hackergal and Astro STEM Labs to mentor and empower young girls in STEM.

Azka received a Civic Award of Recognition from her hometown for her contributions. She is part of various school councils, advocating for social equity and promoting diversity. Additionally, she leads outreach events and campaigns as a regional chapter leader at GirlUp and advocates for gender equality in the workplace as a Girls Belong Here ambassador at Plan International Canada. Azka plans to study biomedical engineering at university and is committed to making STEM opportunities accessible and equitable for underserved communities.



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Public Affairs Awardee

# Ashley Nevison



District 5

Citizenship: United States

A student at DuPont Manual High School, Ashley Nevison is a six-time published children's book author and illustrator. She loves pageants, volunteering and dancing and is a varsity cheerleader. She is also the 2024 Miss South Central Kentucky's Teen in the Miss America system.

As the founder and CEO of Sargeant's Army, a 501(c)3 public charity, Ashley spreads hope, kindness and compassion around the world. The charity aims to provide hygienic hope bags to those in need and volunteer opportunities for the youth. Every year, they host the Small Acts Add Up outerwear drive for Giving Tuesday. Their goal is to encourage children across the USA to donate a single outerwear item to a local charity. In the past four years, more than 1,000 youth have donated more than 21,000 outerwear items in all 50 states.

In the future, Ashley aspires to pursue a career in healthcare as an orthopedic surgeon in the United States Army. She has always been passionate about helping people and believes that becoming a military doctor will allow her to continue serving her country.



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Public Affairs Awardee

# Sophia Szymanski



District 6

Citizenship: Poland and United States

Greatly involved with Model UN, Sophia Szymanski is the secretary general of two conferences: Harvard Model United Nations (H-MUN) and LYMUN X, her high school's conference. Through H-MUN, she has raised more than US\$20,000 for the World Food Programme Sudan and the Amazon Rainforest Conservation Fund. At LYMUN X, she hosted more than 600 students from 35 schools and invited the secretary general of the UN and director general of the WHO to virtually address the conference.

In addition to Model UN, Sophia was appointed a student representative to her school district's board of education to bridge the gap between students and administration. She represented about 4,000 students from diverse backgrounds and presented feedback for consideration by the board. Together, they introduced increased budget allocation for school clubs and led their school in joining the nationwide class lawsuit against social media companies.

Partnering her interests in public affairs and science, Sophia is a scholar in her state's STEM Scholars Program, where she toured various local STEM facilities and learned about the local initiatives to reduce climate change in the Chicagoland community.

Sophia's passion for public affairs stems from her dual-citizen background and her experiences living in Poland. Her trilingual ability has greatly influenced her efforts to connect with various cultures and opportunities.

Sophia plans to pursue a double major in chemistry and global health at Northwestern University on the accelerated master's track. She hopes to pursue a career in international development to support women's health globally.



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Public Affairs Awardee

# Ashtyn Young



District 7

Citizenship: United States

Ashtyn Young is an honors student dedicated to service and integrity who strives for achievement in her passions for academics, athletics, performing arts and fine arts. Having learned to push through adversity and emerge better than she began, Ashtyn stays true to her values and does not allow intrusive thoughts to affect her life. For her, it is important to lead by cultivating a positive community with integrity and strength.

Ashtyn is an accomplished flutist and was a key part of the Benedictine College and Atchison Community Orchestra during her final years at Maur Hill-Mount Academy. In addition, she was a competitive swim team member, cheerleader and National Honor Society member. Her dedication also extended to serving as a youth ambassador for the Rainbow Youth Advisory Council, volunteering at the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum and lifeguarding at the Atchison YMCA/ Cray Community Center. Furthermore, she actively pursued her academic interests, attending the prestigious Stanford University Summer Humanities Institute and the University of Kansas Jayhawk's swim camp. Her commitment and leadership were recognized when she was elected Supreme Court Justice at the American Legion Auxiliary Sunflower Girls State.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee



# Natalie Jobe

**District 8**

**Citizenship: United States**

A recent graduate from the Portland Community College, Natalie Jobe is deeply committed to addressing gender-based discrimination and violence by developing comprehensive educational initiatives and promoting equitable legislation. During high school, she led the Intersectional Feminist Advocates to confront violations regarding H.B. 3294, the Menstrual Dignity Act. Her leadership led to the access to free feminine hygiene for her classmates. She also founded the Dismantling Domestic Violence Project, securing a US\$5,000 grant from the Oregon Community Foundation, which was entirely allocated to local domestic violence shelters.

Natalie's dedication to ending domestic violence extends beyond her previous endeavors. During the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session, she served as an intern for one of her state representatives to further her commitment to addressing this critical issue. At the capitol, she focused on gun fatality prevention research - specifically pertaining to gender-based violence - and assisted in the formation of H.B. 2005A, which makes the manufacturing, importing, sale or transfer of undetectable firearms punishable by state law.

During her time at Portland Community College, Natalie further distinguished herself by serving as a student senate member. During her term, she facilitated students' access to crucial support offered through the college's resource centers.

In the upcoming academic year, Natalie will continue her educational journey at Portland State University. Under a pre-law track, she will major in political science with minors in Spanish and women's studies. She aspires to pursue a career as a civil rights attorney, steadfast in her mission to combat gender-based violence within her community.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee



# Lauren Park

District 9

Citizenship: United States

As a high school student, Lauren Park is passionate about addressing academic disparities in the STEM field and promoting socioeconomic mobility. She serves as the president of her school's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) club, standing up for Asian American rights while embracing common American values. Outside of school, Lauren has dedicated three years to running a non-profit organization that provides engineering and robotic classes to younger female students. Through her efforts, she has fundraised approximately US\$20,000, allowing the organization to collaborate with local elementary schools and the YMCA and operate in several countries abroad. Many young female students who have taken Lauren's classes have gone on to become the first female leaders of their school's STEM clubs, expanding their social influence.

As a Los Angeles City Council Youth Member, Lauren represents about 500,000 youths in LA and learned how community issues are discussed and developed into policies. She is also interested in uncovering the secrets of the early universe through data sent by the James Webb Space Telescope.

Lauren is considering majoring in astrophysics and public policy or public economics. As a professional, she hopes to research and develop concrete policies to strengthen social safety nets in the future.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Maia Lopez Yurrita



District 10

Citizenship: Mexico, Spain and United States

Passionate about gender equality and reproductive justice, Maia Lopez Yurrita has led multiple projects, including persuading students to send letters to the Biden administration on why insurance should cover over-the-counter birth control. As president of her Z club, she has held multiple feminine hygiene donation drives for women's shelters.

Maia has advocated for gender equity on a national scale. She presented to the Gender Policy Council at the White House on insurance coverage for over-the-counter reproductive health medications and was interviewed by *ABC News* and the *New York Times* about the importance of sexual education and reproductive justice. She has also written an op-ed for *USA Today* about legislation regarding education and reproductive health in her state, Texas.

Maia has also participated in medical research for the University of California San Diego and testified for the FDA. She hopes to see more inclusivity in the medical field and champions policies that promote equality.

Coming up, Maia will study biomedical engineering with a minor in gender studies at the University of Texas. Through this avenue, she will continue her work in advocacy and deepen the connection between public policy and healthcare.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee



# Emily Qu

**District 11**

**Citizenship: United States**

Having graduated as her high school's valedictorian, Emily Qu is driven by a passion for using a humanistic approach to data science to bring about positive policy reform. Her service as the 2023 Florida Girls State Lieutenant Governor and a nomination for the prestigious Congressional Medal of Merit Award are testaments to her commitment and potential for making a meaningful impact.

From researching mental health curriculum and mental health literacy in her school district to analyzing topical corticosteroid addiction and withdrawal in eczema patients, Emily works towards finding innovative solutions to complex societal challenges, specifically passionate about public health issues. Her work also focuses on providing students with accessible mental health resources. As such, she organized and executed a free public mental health panel open to students in her school district with 10 nonprofit vendors in attendance to provide support. She also independently authored a mental wellness e-book.

In school, Emily is part of the speech and debate club, where she pitched and spearheaded the creation of the school's informative speaking category. She is also president for Mathcounts and Who We Play For and is senior manager of the Academic Team, among other activities. She founded StepForward Dreams for Dance in her community, a nonprofit initiative dedicated to uplifting children in hospitals through donated dance costumes. She volunteered more than 400 hours at her local hospital and is an English and math tutor for elementary school students.

Emily will continue her academic journey at Wharton College at the University of Pennsylvania, where she plans to concentrate in business analytics, business economics and public policy and data science. While in college, she hopes to continue her community service and advocacy through educational policy reform, continuing to connect students with the resources they deserve.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Clara Drysdale



District 12

Citizenship: United States

Born and raised in Colorado, Clara Drysdale is dedicated to solving climate change. In high school, she led her district's first food waste reduction program. By uniting administration, students, kitchen staff and local farms, she began repurposing excess food as animal feed and fertilizer. Her initiative saves about 3,600 pounds of food annually, showcasing her ability to implement sustainable practices at a young age.

Also passionate about STEM, Clara won third place in botany at the Science Olympiad National Competition and first place at the regional level in forestry, chemistry and wind power. She is also the leader of her school's Mathematical Honor Society, and has organized fundraising events that raised nearly US\$10,000.

With a strong foundation in STEM and an unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability, Clara is bringing her talents to Stanford University where she plans to study either environmental or civil engineering. Her vision for the future involves leveraging Stanford's entrepreneurship resources to create a nationwide system that redirects waste from schools, restaurants and grocery stores to food banks and farms. This initiative aims to conserve water and energy while cutting costs for food banks and farms. As she solves climate change, Clara aspires to be a role model for young girls around the globe, demonstrating the impact a woman in STEM can have on the world.



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Public Affairs Awardee

# Andrea Hertz



District 13

Citizenship: Denmark

Andrea Hertz's inspirational leadership led to her election as her high school's student body president. For three consecutive years, she has organized the school fundraiser in collaboration with Plan International, resulting in a record-breaking amount of more than €100,000 raised for sustainable projects and women's rights initiatives in Uganda. This impactful project benefited the high school students and helped break down prejudices about charity work in African countries.

Extremely active in her local community, Andrea is a youth council member for the U.S. Mission in the Kingdom of Denmark, where she arranges youth-oriented events, acts as an advisor and provides a youth perspective to diplomatic strategy. As a volunteer at SAGA, an organization dedicated to strengthening the democratic voices of Danish youth, Andrea has arranged events mobilizing young voters around the election for the European Parliament and acted as spokesperson on national radio in a debate after the election. She was also a director of the admissions and outreach team at the Nordic Study Aboard Community (NSAC) to help young Scandinavians study abroad by connecting them with admissions officers from top universities worldwide.

Andrea is currently taking a gap year to focus on her volunteering work and engagement at SAGA. Looking forward to the future, she hopes to pursue a political science degree at the University of Copenhagen.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Réka Mohosi



District 14

Citizenship: Hungary

Studying at one of her country's top high schools, Réka Mohosi is passionate about learning foreign languages. She participated in a high school student translation competition, translating several poems from German and English. As a class representative, she used social media to create a platform for young people to exchange opinions.

Driven by her interest in global experiences, Réka actively participated in the youth consultation forum within the Veszprem - European Capital of Culture 2023 international project framework. She collaborated with Czech, German, and Slovak students on the international Erasmus+ project, focusing on topics such as the European Union, sustainability and regional identity while demonstrating her global perspective and strong teamwork skills.

Réka is also heavily involved in volunteering for AFS Intercultural Programmes, which arranges events and training for host families and students and coordinates local and regional programs. Despite hailing from a small hometown, she helps organize community programs, and the local government can always count on her. She founded her school's Z club and encouraged people to work for purposes other than just for pay.

Réka aspires to be a trainer who creates opportunities for people interested in making a difference and being open to the world so that international community work can be a part of their lives. She hopes to show that no form of discrimination should hinder the pursuit of our aspirations.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Jazmyne Rees



**District 15**

**Citizenship: United States**

Jazmyne Rees is a graduate of Roscommon High School, and plans on improving humanity's quality of life as a neuropsychologist. Early on in her high school career, Jazmyne participated in the Congress of Future Medical Leaders hosted by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists, where she first discovered her passion for the brain. Through exposure of psychology-related dual enrollment and AP classes offered at her school, she became interested in her field of study and career.

Beyond her academic passion for the mind, however, is her love for people. As a community leader, she has developed and chartered charities through her school's student council as an executive officer, including local food drives, shelters and a child protection council—raising more than US\$10,000. She also joined community organizations like her town's Downtown Development Authority, where she provides the unique insight of a teenager into the city's development process, targeting the attention of the newer population and focusing on the economic growth and vitality of the downtown district. In Interact—a student-led branch of Rotary—she raised awareness for social issues like global disparities in medical treatment, wealth and equity in a fundraising campaign called “Root Beer Float for a Cause.”

As Jazmyne Rees continues her academic journey in college, she plans to maintain her active involvement in community service programs like Hand2Hand and Community Rebuilders. She also intends to conduct undergraduate research projects to gain practical experience in her field. Her ultimate goal as an aspiring neuropsychologist is to improve the accessibility and equity of mental healthcare in rural communities and to develop integrative treatments for mental health issues.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Mackenzie Wills



District 16

Citizenship: New Zealand

Mackenzie Wills is a dedicated leader who serves as the Head Student at Rolleston College. Since elementary school, she has been involved in youth leadership, building meaningful relationships with local organizations, supporting other young leaders, and gaining hands-on experience in various local government areas.

Committed to the Zonta mission of building a better world for women and girls, Mackenzie advocates for many different issues that New Zealand women face. These include women's stronger financial literacy and broader career pathways.

Mackenzie has been a member of her local youth council since 2022, and she currently serves as the chairperson. The council meets every two weeks and is responsible for representing the voices of young people in local government decisions. One of the most significant experiences for Mackenzie has been her involvement in the representation review committee, where she collaborates with the mayor and councilors to make decisions about local voting wards. This experience has reinforced the significance of voting and accessibility and has provided an opportunity to contribute to the process of change.

As a youth council member, Mackenzie has supported the development and opening of a youth hub. This facility houses a range of free agencies that support youth health and well-being. She has also managed events, participated in numerous council activities and interviewed new youth council candidates.

Mackenzie is eager to embark on her journey at Canterbury University, where she will study law and political science. She looks forward to continuing to lead in various areas and is passionate about pursuing a career in public service with a focus on social justice.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee



# Premrudee Mepremwattana

District 17

Citizenship: Thailand

Premrudee “Premmy” Mepremwattana is an activist and writer. As the co-president of Fifty Squared, a UN-recognized nonprofit organization with branches across the globe, she is devoted to bridging the gender gap. Fifty Squared has partnered with several organizations and held countless fundraisers and events to raise awareness and contribute to the cause. She has been recognized as part of the UN Women’s 30 for 2030 Network.

Through her love of writing and dedication to amplifying voices in marginalized and underrepresented communities, Premmy serves as founder and co-editor-in-chief for the *Alexandrian Review*. The magazine is a rapidly growing platform for young voices from more than 12 countries. Recognized by the Alliance for Young Writers and Artists, her work has been published or is forthcoming in the *Social Justice Initiative*, *NCTE*, the *Silver-tongued Literary Magazine* and *Under the Madness*. She is *Polyphony Lit*’s genre managing editor, contest judge and co-host of “Students Incorporated,” a podcast offering weekly business, marketing, technology and design-focused content.

Premmy is a senior at the International Community School Bangkok in Thailand. She hopes to one day attend college in the United States and pursue a major in liberal arts and a minor in women’s studies or sociology.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Amaanat Rekhi



District 17

Citizenship: Hong Kong

Amaanat Rekhi is a changemaker with an avid interest in technology, entrepreneurship and social equality. Internationally and nationally recognized for her academic achievements, her passion for making a difference has led her to execute four projects: Youth4Youth, The Gen Z Nexus, Morph and TURTLE.

As the only girl studying computer science at her school, Amaanat was driven to found Youth4Youth to empower girls to pursue STEM subjects and career pathways through engaging in exploration-based activities. Today, this has evolved into an international organization that has taught more than 250 children through more than 120 STEM sessions. Her team now comprises almost 80 individuals who teach STEM in Hong Kong, Korea and India, with plans to reach Australia and the UK.

Furthermore, Amaanat founded The Gen Z Nexus, a student consultancy striving to help businesses and social enterprises market their products in a way that engages younger generations. She also founded Morph, a project that makes usable products from plastic waste using a shredder and injection machine. She is currently developing TURTLE, a solar-powered robot to collect plastic waste around her city. Amaanat's efforts have garnered national and international acclaim, earning her honors like the Spirit of Hong Kong Awards finalist, Hong Kong Award for Young People, TEDx presenter, the University of Hong Kong Academy for the Talented (HKUACT) membership and the Hong Kong Academic for Gifted Education (HKAGE) membership.

Looking ahead, Amaanat plans to major in a STEM field and public policy studies. She hopes to continue striving for equality through entrepreneurship and use her public policy degree to get involved in the legislative process to help women regain their stories and voices.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee



# Nissi Arday

**District 18**

**Citizenship: Ghana**

Nissi Arday firmly believes in the power of effective legislation to drive global change. She aspires to pursue a career in diplomacy after completing her bachelor's degree in law in England. Her unwavering dedication to autism advocacy and her leadership roles in school have laid a solid foundation for her future goals, instilling in her a profound sense of purpose and an unyielding drive to make a significant impact in the world.

Nissi's passionate commitment to autism awareness has been central to her advocacy over the past four years. She started by raising awareness about the stigmatization of autistic children through a lecture at her church, raising GHS 18,000 for the HopeSetters Autism Centre, which led to the construction of a speech therapy block. As a co-founder of Spectrum Connect Ghana, she has raised autism awareness and supported autism centers. Media engagements, including a radio and television interview, prompted the Anglican Diocese of Accra to promote further fundraising and campaigns.

In addition to her autism advocacy, Nissi has demonstrated outstanding leadership as a student leader at Catherine Hostel, her school's dormitory, and as a student council member. She successfully raised GHS 10,000 for Operation Smile, earning her a full scholarship to the Student Leadership Conference in Peru. This opportunity allowed her to expand her cultural understanding and global awareness while honing her leadership abilities. She also organized a donation campaign for Spectrum Connect, raising GHS 7,000 and highlighting her ability to rally resources for causes she is passionate about. These experiences have taught her the importance of balancing academics with community service and the value of open-mindedness in today's rapidly changing global environment, skills that will undoubtedly benefit her future career as an international diplomat.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee



# Priscila Barrios

Region South America

Citizenship: Uruguay

From a young age, Priscila Barrios has been a role model for her peers. During elementary and middle school, she excelled as a delegate and spokesperson for her class, actively participated in organizing school events and consistently made the honor roll. As the vice president of her local Interact club, Priscila leads and advises young people through various informational, volunteer, economic and ecological activities in her community. Her experiences have bolstered her confidence in decision-making, providing her with the composure necessary for her current work.

In the future, Priscila plans to pursue a degree in biotechnology as a step toward making a difference in healthcare. She aims to improve lives through pharmaceutical research and the development of gene therapies and vaccines. Furthermore, she intends to continue her involvement with non-governmental organizations such as Rotary and Zonta International.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee



# Isa Parviainen

**District 20**

**Citizenship: Finland**

Isa Parviainen's deep immersion in mathematics, science, and technology is fueled by her passion for robotics and 4-H entrepreneurship. It is her personal mission to inspire young girls to break stereotypes and pursue careers in these fields. Her dedication is evident in completing art studies at the Taika Design and Art School and her three-year tenure in the student government.

Isa has showcased her positive impact on the community through her four-year leadership of Olivia's Waffle, a 4-H business venture she founded, and her recognition as a 2023 Citizens of Orimattila finalist. She has shared her entrepreneurial journey on a podcast and demo shooting to empower others.

For six years, Isa also been a robotics team member, winning competitions and representing Finland at the VEX World Robotics Championships in the U.S. She has also raised funds by presenting robotics to companies and runs a robotics club for elementary school pupils.

Currently, Isa is a Rotary Youth Exchange Student in Australia for the 2024-2025 academic year. After graduating from upper secondary school, she aims to study biomedicine and would like her career to combine robotics, global connectivity and creativity.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Sindija Brakmane



District 21

Citizenship: Latvia

Sindija Brakmane, a high school senior with ambitious goals and a clear vision for her future, has been actively engaged in various projects since 15. Her academic excellence, reflected in her grades, has not only earned her scholarships but also a place among the top 15 young individuals in Latvia in the Junior Achievement Latvia Leadership Programme. She attributes her success to her academic achievements and the opportunities they have brought her, expressing her belief in her potential to achieve great things as a young woman.

Notably, Sindija has created a podcast promoting self-development among Latvia's young people. Through this platform, she has collaborated with leading psychologists and specialists in the field. Additionally, she is an ambassador for Junior Achievement Latvia Alumni opportunities, actively supporting and guiding young individuals in their personal and professional growth.

As a dedicated volunteer, Sindija has devoted two years to StartOne, an organization that organizes camps for youth at risk of dropping out of school due to motivational challenges.

In her continuous growth and pursuit of learning, Sindija has participated in Erasmus exchange programs, broadening her horizons and cultural understanding. After graduating from high school, she is set to embark on an Erasmus Exchange Programme for Young Entrepreneurs in Malta. During this six-month program, she will work on developing her own business under the mentorship of Connectclub Ltd. This opportunity aligns with Sindija's passion for entrepreneurship and innovation, showcasing her determination to excel in business.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee

# Mary Do



**District 22**

**Citizenship: Australia**

Mary Do is passionate about empowering and uplifting young women through education, service and advocacy. She is a student at Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Technology (QASMT), a selective school that has nurtured her interest in STEM. Throughout her academic journey, she has represented her school at the 2022 Australian Science Fair in Melbourne and the 2023 Singapore International STEM Innovation Challenge alongside two of her peers. These opportunities have broadened her perspective and shown her the transformative power of education.

As an immigrant from Vietnam, Mary is determined to create opportunities for people from underrepresented backgrounds. She has served as a service ambassador for two years and is currently the service captain. She has organized and led fundraising events in these roles, raising more than AUS\$2,700 for various charities. Her dedication to service is also reflected in her involvement in the school's Z club, where she sewed breast cushions for breast cancer patients and provided support to those in need.

Mary is dedicated to advocating for important causes. She represented QASMT at the annual Youth Roundtable during Queensland Youth Week, where she advocated for mental health support, female representation in the community and equal access to education. Her steadfast commitment to inspiring young girls in STEM is evident through her role as a Young Einstein's mentor for three years, guiding gifted primary school students in completing STEM projects.

Looking ahead, Mary aspires to be a doctor or a STEM teacher and believes these professions will allow her to pay forward the educational opportunities she has received.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee

# Lilly Correll



**District 23**

**Citizenship: Australia**

For years, Lilly Correll has volunteered with the city of Greater Bendigo and the wider community. Last year, she was elected the youngest deputy youth mayor; this year, she was elected the youngest youth mayor for Greater Bendigo. She takes great pride in this role and aims to better the community through her youth mayorship.

In 2023, she was invited to speak as a panelist and youth representative at the State Parliament's WE LEAD Women in Leadership event. This program aimed to inspire young women to participate in local politics and discourage the imposter syndrome many young women feel in leadership roles. She was also a Greater Bendigo Youth Parliament team member, where she drafted and debated a bill: Increasing Public Safety in Regional and Rural Areas. The bill successfully passed the program and was given to state government ministers.

Lilly has also been a member of the Bendigo Sustainability Group Committee of Management, a local not-for-profit organization that aims to increase positive environmental outcomes. She is currently a member of Coliban Water's customer advisory committee, Greater Bendigo's local water authority.

In early 2024, Lilly was invited to participate in the Women in Gold Exhibition. She provided a quotation for part of the mural that featured numerous powerful local women and six artists for International Women's Day. Lilly believes that everyone should be empowered to make the most of life's opportunities regardless of background. She hopes to pursue a career in public service after studying politics, philosophy and economics.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Inika Narayan



**District 24**

**Citizenship: Australia**

Eager about pursuing a career in law and business, Inika Narayan is deeply interested in helping people within her community and wants to spark change.

As a student at Tara Anglican School for Girls, Inika has had many accomplishments, such as becoming a national finalist in the Newcastle University Business Challenge. In this challenge, she created a soft toy called 'SOOTHLES' to help relieve anxiety among hospitalized children. She also won the Western Sydney University Blueprint Competition for public speaking. After learning about his hardships in South Sudan, she donated the prize money to the foundation of New South Wales's Australian of the Year, Deng Adut. In another charitable effort, she led a fundraiser to support victims affected by the Turkey-Syria earthquake. She donated about AUS\$690 to Anglican Aid to buy necessities for those who lost everything.

Inika's commitment to serving others has led her to join her school's student representatives council. Through the council's initiatives, such as Multicultural Day and International Women's Day, she has helped raise more than AUS\$10,000 for the Parramatta Women's Shelter. During the COVID-19 lockdown, she joined the community by organizing virtual baking classes to raise funds for Friends of India Australia and was featured on SBS news.

Winning the Young Women in Public Affairs Award holds significant meaning for Inika. She hopes to use this award to initiate impactful projects that push for a more inclusive society, empowering young girls to believe anything is possible.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Vyshalini Rajendran



**District 25**

**Citizenship: Sri Lanka**

As president of the Broadcasting Unit club, Vyshalini Rajendran is an avid technologist who has assisted several girls to become proficient video editors and visual designers. She has served as her school's captain and achieved the highest mark globally in her Pearson Edexcel iLowerSecondary English Examinations. She is also passionate about bridging the art of language with technology. At the Microsoft Tech for Good Challenge, Vyshalini led her team to finals for global communication, competing against 400 schools worldwide. Her work has led her to be invited as a TEDx Youth speaker to address disparities in communication and computer interfaces.

During her time as under-secretary general of the Model UN club, Vyshalini's passion for international relations led her to numerous conferences, including the Sri Lanka Model UN and the Princeton Model UN. Being nominated the best delegate of the Security Council multiple times, she has deep insight into diplomacy amid rigorous dialogue. Through the community-based Interact Club of Colombo North, she also conducted international understanding projects, further enhancing her proficiency in this area. As captain of her debate team, Vyshalini partook in several national tournaments, debating thought-provoking topics such as domestic abuse, legal systems and child trafficking.

Vyshalini also strongly believes in giving back to her local community. In addition to chairing Model UN conferences and adjudicating debates, she volunteers as a mathematics teacher at her school. She works part-time as a computer science and information and communications technology mentor. In the upcoming year, she will pursue a degree in computer science and psychology.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee



# Koto Kanori

District 26

Citizenship: Japan

Seeing the prevalence of gender stereotypes growing up in Japan, Koto Kanori established a youth organization, Change For Her, to provide all youth with equal educational opportunities. Currently, Change For Her has more than 40 members from 11 countries and is continuously expanding. The organization's current projects include publishing articles on its website, covering topics ranging from period stigma, influence, women and the misconceptions of feminism. Change For Her also has an ongoing mentorship program that provides English lessons to students in China, Madagascar and Malawi. The group also published its first children's storybook to bring awareness to the issue of cultural gender norms that hinder girls from achieving their dreams, particularly in pursuing STEM fields.

Kanori is also a member of the Japanese DECA council, where she researched, wrote and presented a policy proposal to implement entrepreneurship into the Japanese education system to the Japanese official education bureau in Tokyo. She believes that entrepreneurship and business are the keys to allowing students to develop essential skills and equipping them to thrive and tackle social issues. She hopes to give students across Japan this opportunity.

At her school, United World Colleges, Kanori volunteered at a local orphanage, teaching students English and playing interactive games weekly. Later this year, she will attend Phillips Academy Andover in Massachusetts, USA. She hopes to continue expanding Change For Her's initiatives and creating more impact in communities.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Mahla Hossein Zadeh



District 27

Citizenship: Afghanistan

Since 2015, Mahla Hossein Zadeh has lived in Hamburg with her family. Her interest in people and volunteering developed in her early years. At the age of 12, she started working as a volunteer and gave children an inline skate course. She also provides dance performances for seniors at a local nursing home.

Dedicated to bringing joy to others, Mahla believes that doing good deeds is essential and should not be treated as returnable favors. It is vital that everything one does for someone else must come from the heart, otherwise both the recipient and oneself are dissatisfied.

Currently, Mahla attends the Stadtteilschule Bramfeld and is expected to complete her Abitur in 2026. She hopes to continue her education afterward while continuing volunteering in her daily life. Not only does she hold leadership positions at school, but she also dedicates her spare time to being actively involved in a wide variety of clubs, striving to make a positive impact and contribute to the betterment of society.

Mahla has been serving as the vice president of Golden Z Hamburg Club since 2023 and is actively involved with Sisters Network. In 2022, she co-organized an intercultural summer festival and fashion show with Never Give Up Förderverein. She also volunteers with Schule: Global to promote diversity and combat discrimination, and she is helping plan a school project week to showcase cultural diversity, aiming to inspire and support others.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Paulina Molteni



**District 27**

**Citizenship: Germany**

Paulina has loved being in action since a young age, whether as one of the speakers between students and staff or in the voluntary youth fire brigade.

During her senior years she led her theatre class for almost two years, planning and conducting a self-written play about femicides. To further her and others' understanding of democracy she competed in her school's debate tournament until finals, alongside taking education being a junior judge. In addition, she formed a student committee to support the organization of her school's yearbook for the first time ever.

Paulina is an ambassador for the NPO International Justice Mission where she gives lectures, writes articles, and visits seminars in different cities to raise awareness for modern human trafficking. And helps to end the business model of slavery by 2030. Furthermore, she is deputy chair of the student advisory board at the Student Research Centre. Her mission as a youth researcher, support women and people of color to be more active and confident in STEM fields.

To fight against the ever-present issue of climate change, Paulina is a member of Fridays for Future, organizing and ensuring the safety of demonstrations joined by up to 30,000 people. For Germany's oldest and largest environmental association, the NABU, she realizes clean-up campaigns, workshops and charity concerts.

A project that is especially dear to Paulina that she brought to life on her own is a Queer art exhibition that features the work of international, queer and previously-little-known artists. All proceeds made will be used to finance the medical transition of one of the artists.

After graduation, Paulina aims to volunteer in Thailand to immerse herself in the local cultures, life and politics and get clarity about her career aspirations. She is currently torn between pursuing law, physics and stage direction.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee

# Cara Herzog



**District 28**

**Citizenship: Germany**

Cara has been actively involved in the student council, holding several leadership positions. Currently, she is leading the Social Working Group, where she is spearheading initiatives such as stem cell registration and organizing charity fundraisers for food and clothing drives. In addition, she is overseeing the Mental Health Workgroup, which is dedicated to sharing information and providing support for student services.

Cara not only fulfills her council responsibilities but also serves as a course representative, a member of the graduation committee and a delegate at the City of Frankfurt Student Council and School Conference. Through these roles, she advocates for student welfare and represents their interests. Mentoring younger students has been especially rewarding for her as she has witnessed their growth firsthand.

Apart from school commitments, Cara volunteers in her local church community, leading a children's group that organizes monthly outings and activities. She is also actively involved in the Youth Council, certified as a youth leader, organizing recreational activities and camps for children.

During her transformative year in the U.S. as part of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program, Cara served as a junior ambassador, deepening her understanding of diplomacy and cross-cultural communication. She dedicated 100 certified hours to local social service projects and participated in events like Civic Education Week, gaining insight into U.S. democratic processes. Cara also led a workshop on cultural awareness at the Girls Scout Leadership Conference where she fostered global citizenship.

Post-Abitur, Cara plans to take a gap year volunteering in a Spanish-speaking country through the European Solidarity Corps. She will pursue a college degree in STEM or politics to further her passion for science, research and public affairs.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Justine Thébault-Weiser



District 28

Citizenship: France and United States

Justine Thébault-Weiser is a French American high school senior interested in improving gender equality in STEM. She recently graduated from the International School Basel with an International Baccalaureate diploma.

At her school, Justine has jump-started gender equality initiatives, mainly through her documentary, “Women in STEM.” The documentary highlights four women’s lives and careers in different STEM areas. It is intended to inspire middle and high school girls’ curiosity about science and math and encourage them to consider these career paths. This documentary was shown to all middle and high school students at her school to enable them to explore STEM.

Justine also conducted primary research in her school through a survey to try and identify the root causes of differences in attitudes toward STEM and enrollment in STEM classes between female and male students.

As part of Thriving Elements’ mentoring organization, Justine advocates for gender equality. She has volunteered as an event organizer for the organization’s Swiss Kick-Off, bringing together students and STEM professionals from across Switzerland for on-site mentoring and team building. She also assists Thriving Elements with its mission through mentee recruitment. Justine is also a mentor, volunteering to help high school girls with math and physics so they can feel more confident in their ability to succeed in these classes, which can also make them more likely to pick STEM career paths in the future.

Justine plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree in physics at McGill University later this year. She will continue pursuing activities related to empowering women in STEM in this community and exploring new ways of helping others.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Ella Gottschling



District 29

Citizenship: Germany

Ella Gottschling is interested in diplomacy, policymaking, research and statistics. Since the age of 14, she has attended university courses in history, philosophy, psychology and biochemistry. After graduating from high school early, she started studying economics at the University of Bonn, and she is now in her second year.

During her school years, Ella initially volunteered in elementary schools and worked on renaturing landscapes and climate science projects. However, she later discovered her passion for youth politics and advocating for young voices to be heard. She co-founded the debate club during high school, which sparked her interest in global politics and history. This led her to participate in debating competitions and Model UN.

In 2023, Ella was chosen as one of eight members of the German delegation to the 100th session of the European Youth Parliament. She has also advocated for children's rights. In 2020, she began working with UNICEF and established a youth team that grew to more than 25 members. In 2022, she was elected to the UNICEF Youth Advisory Board and now serves as the national representative for children's rights and the voice of the youth. She has met with various politicians and members of several ministries and attended conferences such as the UN Water Conference and the ICCM5. Additionally, she is in her second year as the deputy speaker for the youth council of Düsseldorf, where she represents the city's youth in politics and media. In this role, she had the opportunity to visit numerous projects throughout Germany and California as part of an ambassador's program designed to promote connections between German and American youth.

In the future, Ella hopes to deepen her studies in statistics and human rights issues and continue to advocate for children's and women's rights, especially in education and health.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Marlene Walter



District 29

Citizenship: Germany

Marlene Walter is a fervent advocate for gender equality and a sustainable future. Her leadership as the president and founder of the Sustainability Club is a testament to her commitment. She spearheads local action projects with her club that align with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. After successfully participating in the International Buddies Without Borders forum, "Women in the Economy," Marlene's team won the Best Team Award for investing in a woman's local business in Uganda. She was also awarded the forum's Best Representative Award for her sustainability club.

Marlene's global perspective is evident in her achievements. She organized a Model UN event at her school to give international students equal access to quality political education. Her participation in several Erasmus exchange programs, including those in Denmark, Spain and Germany, further underscores her adaptability and global outlook.

In addition to her involvement as a student representative of her grade, Marlene also tutored a Ukrainian refugee in German. She participated in the Just Justice project, where students interviewed with their local gender equality office and critically questioned the city's efforts toward gender equality. Outside of school, Marlene volunteered at a retirement home, organizing events and promoting intergenerational contact with the residents.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in German and with a Part-IB certificate, Marlene plans to study international relations abroad. She aspires to pursue a career in politics or economics to improve women's representation.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Antoaneta Dimova



**District 30**

**Citizenship: Bulgaria**

Born in the small town of Ruse, Bulgaria Antoaneta Dimova has been enamored with creating a better world by volunteering since childhood. Her passion has led her to pursue many activities in hopes of making an impact and helping those in need.

During her years at Geo Milev English Language School, Antoaneta participated in many competitions and projects, both in and out of school, to research and develop a deep appreciation for volunteering. As a proud member of various organizations, such as Zonta International, Lions, Red Cross and more, she supported various causes aimed at empowering her community. For example, Antoaneta's Zonta journey began in 2024 when she reached out to many of her peers about anti-cyberbully awareness.

Looking ahead, Antoaneta plans to continue her education and pursue a degree in marketing. She hopes to build her own company while envisioning a future full of volunteerism and community involvement.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee

# Anthea Reeb



**District 30**

**Citizenship: Bulgaria**

Anthea Reeb, an 18-year-old from southern Germany, discovered her interest in politics and social engagement at a young age. In eighth grade, her teacher introduced her to opportunities beyond the classroom, which inspired Anthea to start a youth council in her hometown. Despite initial skepticism from local politicians, she collected signatures, and in May 2022, Anthea was elected as one of the nine members of the youth council. She is now addressing crucial issues for the youth, such as improving public transportation to Heidelberg.

Anthea's commitment to making a difference goes beyond borders. She participated in an exchange program in Indiana, USA, called the Parlamentarische Patenschafts-Programm (PPP), where she could immerse herself in American culture. This experience highlighted the significance of cross-cultural understanding and motivated her to get involved with Experiment e.V., a non-profit exchange organization. As a Young European Professionals (YEPs) member, she advocates for the benefits of a peaceful, democratic and united Europe.

At the J.-S.-Bach-Gymnasium, Anthea has taken on several leadership roles. She has served as the school and class representative and is a trained student and media paramedic, providing first aid for both technological and medical issues. Anthea's role as a MINT ambassador is particularly noteworthy, as she advocates for STEM education and challenges gender stereotypes in engineering and technical fields.

Anthea's academic focus is on mathematics, English and economics. She has ambitious plans for the future, aiming to pursue international business studies after graduation. This choice of study reflects her long-term commitment to making a global impact. Her path demonstrates her commitment to making a difference locally and globally and motivating others, especially young women, to get involved and take on a leadership role.



2024 Young Women in  
Public Affairs Awardee

# Chih-Syuan Lin



District 31

Citizenship: Republic of China (Taiwan)

Chih-Syuan “Carina” Lin is a student at Kaohsiung American School, where she was elected student council president. During her tenure, she pioneered Wish Week and raised TWD\$3,000 to fulfill the wishes of two children diagnosed with leukemia. She also led the establishment of vending machines to address student hunger, generating \$10,000 annually for the student council.

Carina also serves as president of her Z club, advocating for women’s empowerment through service events and social media. She shared and gained insights on global women’s issues at the Asian Inter-District Meeting. Moreover, she led her club during Breast Cancer Awareness Week to creatively raise donations and awareness with pins and cookies.

Outside of school, Carina co-founded KINWA, a startup that incorporates Taiwanese red quinoa into desserts and partners with local disability welfare associations. KINWA earned TWD\$5,000 in the first two months of operation. She also founded Ani, an organization that fosters mental health awareness by creating a secure online space for teenagers to share struggles and receive support.

Looking to the future, Carina plans to study psychology, neuroscience and biomedical engineering to approach psychological challenges holistically. She aspires to begin as a therapist to gain experience and enhance her knowledge, empathy and the ability to implement effective interventions. Eventually, she will transition into entrepreneurship, using her expertise to develop innovative solutions for current problems. Carina remains committed to volunteer work and community service, particularly in mental health, women’s rights and supporting underprivileged groups.



## 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee

# Jihyeon Sung



**District 32**

**Citizenship: South Korea**

Jihyeon “Cherry” Sung is the founder and executive director of an international environmental youth-led organization, Greener is Cleaner. Since 2018, she has impacted more than 30,000 individuals by hosting conferences and campaigns, speaking at events like the UN Food Forum and creating educational content often with partners like Unilever. Cherry was chair of the Ministry of Environment’s Environmental Education Youth Committee and passed environmental education policy proposals, leading to meetings with the First Lady of Korea and the Minister of the Environment . Her dedication has earned her numerous recognitions, including the 2024 East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) Global Citizenship award, the 2023 RISE Global Winner and the 2021 International Young Eco Hero.

At school, Cherry participated in service trips to Nepal for women’s empowerment and to the Philippines for children’s education. She leads the service council, which promotes volunteerism and global citizenship, and the sustainability council, where she spearheaded the annual Eco-Schools Symposium, which brought together ten international organizations, participants from various schools, and experts to enhance local sustainability.

Cherry has participated in more than 65 Model UN (MUN) conferences. She is the president, former secretary-general and future standing advisor of the school MUN club. She is also the founder and secretary-general of TogetherMUN Korea, a student-run online MUN that has reached more than 4,000 international participants, partnered with eight UN/IGOs, and won the Best MUN Award from the UN.

Collaborating with diverse youths and policymakers has enhanced Cherry’s leadership and broadened her perspective. She plans to major in environmental policy in university, continuing to empower young women and lead by example.