



Seven students were selected as recipients of the Changebuilder Scholars Award through New Jersey Campus Compact's AmeriCorps Changebuilders program

JERSEY CITY, NJ. – May 6, 2020 – New Jersey Campus Compact (NJCC), a statewide coalition of more than 20 colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education, has honored seven New Jersey graduating students with the Changebuilder Scholars Award. These scholars were selected through a competitive statewide application process as part of [NJCC's AmeriCorps Changebuilders](#) program, designed to increase by at least 5,000 the number of civically engaged college graduates who are skilled in implementing community change projects and who also have developed 21st-century workplace skills. Traditionally, one awardee from each institution receives \$1,000 to be used in any way that the awardees believe supports their continued success as students and engaged members of their communities.

The 2020 cohort of Changebuilders Scholars come from diverse backgrounds and are putting New Jersey on the path to being the engaged state. We are excited to congratulate the following public scholars:

Hope Andrescavage – Stockton University. Because of her attention to detail and commitment to service at places like the Salvation Army in Atlantic City, Hope will become an asset to any community in which she serves, especially as she continues on her pathway to excellence in the computer science field.

Ama Asante – Drew University. Ama has a proven ability to lead with kindness and perseverance. Additionally, she consistently acts to ensure that young people of all abilities find a pathway to fulfillment and will make a fine educator in the near future, no doubt.

Laryssa Durschlag – William Paterson University. Laryssa is passionate about serving those with food insecurities, demonstrated by her volunteer work at the campus Pioneer Food Pantry. She has helped coordinate programs to assemble meal and care packages for local shelters, school kits for Paterson schools, and toy drives for community centers.

Valeria Izeppi – Raritan Valley Community College. Through her work as president of the Environmental Club, Valeria has proven herself to be a dedicated and effective leader. She has consistently demonstrated self-motivation, a high level of dedication to duties, and devotion to the projects she has worked on with peers.

Emma Lopez-Bianchi – New Jersey City University. Emma has been described as a *force* when it comes to serving humanity. Her path to an advanced degree in Public Administration in Nonprofit Management will allow her to realize her potential as an engaged citizen.

Claudia Wetzel – Ramapo College of New Jersey. Among many other projects, Claudia led groups in Ghana and Costa Rica in particular at a wildlife sanctuary. She led by example, facilitated reflections sessions, kept up the group's spirits, mediated conflict, and supported the staff trip leader both competently and compassionately.

Gabrielle “Bri” Rooks – Drew University. Bri has chosen since a young age to act locally, nationally, and globally to protect people's rights to food, shelter, and dignity. Her presentation at the Campus Compact student conference at Middlesex County College this year also showed that she is a highly competent peer educator and collaborator.

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Director of Changebuilders, and CEO of New Jersey Campus Compact (NJCC), Dr. Saul Petersen explained, “These young scholars are following in the footsteps of last year’s scholars in building the foundations of change for a better future. We at NJCC are immensely proud to support their work as Changebuilders in partnership with our current Changebuilder campuses. Through our partnership with AmeriCorps and our member campuses, these students are building change from within, demonstrating with their actions how we ALL play a crucial role.”

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To learn more about the program, for public comment, or to learn how you can support these Changebuilder students’ success, contact the NJCC team at saul@njcampuscompact.org or call Executive Director, Dr. Saul Petersen at 609-335-3668.

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