

## 2015-2016 Plastino Scholar Finalists

### **Navika Gangrade**

Title: Seeds of Change: An Exploration into the Nutritional Impact of Urban Farms

Major: Dietetics

Minor: Psychology

### **Christopher Gunter**

Title: The Missing Voices Project – Understanding the Collateral Consequences of the Convicted and Charged

Major: Criminal Justice

Minor: Sociology

### **Max Holdsworth**

Title: Preventive Health in Great Britain's National Health Service

Major: Public Policy; Economics

### **Alexis Holzmann**

Title: School Over Summer Vacation: An Opportunity for Collaborative Learning with the Koonwarra Village School

Major: International Relations

Minors: Urban Educational Studies, Sociology, French

### **Katie Katz**

Title: Oral Rehydration Solutions in Rwanda

Major: Nursing

### **Emily Wunsch**

Title: Disparities in Health Care: Healthcare Outreach with the Latino Community in the American Southwest

Major: Exercise Science; Spanish Studies

Minor: Chemistry

**Navika Gangrade**

**Seeds of Change: An Exploration into the Nutritional Impact of Urban Farms**

**Abstract**

Urban farms are landscapes of true lushness hiding out in America's concrete "jungles." Research has proven that these simple plots of dirt and seeds can yield magnificent benefits. Among these benefits are those in nutrition and food choice. Urban farms not only provide fresh produce to confer these benefits, but also provide exposure and education through nutrition outreach programs, such as youth gardens, farmer's markets, and community workshops. These programs seem to be a huge reason for the nutritional influence of urban farms. However, these programs are left vastly unstudied in current research.

For my project, I hope to delve into this untapped realm. This summer, I will visit five urban farms (KAMII Gardens in Chicago, Greensgrow in Philadelphia, Seattle Tilth in Seattle, Farmshare Austin in Austin, and BK Farmyards in Brooklyn) that have model nutrition programs and explore their specific impact. At each farm, I will volunteer within the program, as well as shadow the program director. Then, I will conduct unstructured qualitative interviews with workers and community members on their involvement and nutrition. With all this information, I will assemble a report of *whose* nutrition the program influences, *what nutrition aspects* it influences, and *how* exactly it influences. Then, as a Delaware student and resident, I hope to bring effective programs and ideas, based on my data, to the state's blossoming urban agriculture scene.

As a student in Dietetics, I have learned that nutrition is a huge contributor to health and longevity. I have also learned how difficult it can be to change and improve. However, I believe that urban farms have this instigative capability, and I am very passionate about exploring them further.

**Christopher S. Gunter**

**The Missing Voices Project – Understanding the Collateral Consequences of the Convicted and Charged**

**Abstract**

Walking into the classroom there was a confident glow on his face; many things ran through his classmates' minds as he passed by. His clothes were freshly pressed, shirt crisp white, shoes shined, and hair neatly styled— he was a model student. He was the class president, a straight-A student, and always on top of everything— while others wondered where his flaws might lie. As the teacher began to go over the homework from the night before, his mind began to drift into life beyond the walls of his school. What the other students do not see is that he does not live the perfect life they envisioned for him.

In fact, unlike most of his friends, he lives in the heart of a poverty-stricken community in Wilmington, Delaware. He is responsible for maintaining and providing the finances for his household. His mother suffers from stage-two breast cancer, and his father a former convicted felon. Due to his background, Chase's father is unable to secure employment. Since the conviction in 1995, Chase's father has changed his life for the better. He has obtained a master's degree in Computer Science and is also a certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor, yet he is still unable to secure employment, voter's rights, and the right to receive government subsidies simply because of his criminal background.

Like Chase's father, millions of individuals within the US endure similar struggles of regaining their freedoms after being convicted or charged with a crime. Oftentimes, these voices go unnoticed and unheard. Stories such as Chase's have intrinsically motivated me to study Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware. Understanding the narratives of the convicted and being enlightened to new facets, such as the collateral consequences associated with the family members of those convicted, pose extraordinary challenges for the criminal justice system. Topics such as reintegration and regaining civil rights (i.e., the ability to vote or receive government assistance) for the incarcerated, charged, or arrested, has also sparked my interest to study the criminal justice system.

As a first-generation, African-American, independent student, who has relentlessly remained committed to my academic, personal, and spiritual success, it is my mission to continue to advocate for the missing voices of individuals who have served their time and/or community, but are still inadvertently tied to the tyrannical bondage of their past – everyone deserves a fair chance.

I am self-assured that this experience to travel to California, whereby, entire communities are being disenfranchised by their criminal background, energizes me to continue to fight for what's right. As a senior, it is my goal to attend Cornell School of Law to obtain and to become an emerging leader within the criminal system. It is my mission to shed light on innovative research outcomes that will produce lasting effects within the criminal justice system domestically and one day abroad. Ultimately, I am confident that this experience will expose me to life outside of my social norms. And just as my best friend Chase was challenged to “beat the odds”— I too will overcome!

**Max Holdsworth**  
**Preventive Health in Great Britain's National Health Service**

**Abstract**

Preventive health is the field of public health that helps to prevent the onset and expansion of sometimes fatal illnesses. Through its National Health Service (NHS), the United Kingdom (UK) implements programs of preventive health. I became interested in the NHS because my family in England has benefitted from the NHS's universal services, and I am working toward a leadership career in public health.

My David A. Plastino Scholarship fellowship consists of a comprehensive plan to research the NHS by focusing on its programs of smoking cessation, mental health rehabilitation programs, and cancer screening. I will examine these from the perspectives of three major stakeholder groups: academics, health care professionals, and NHS consumers. I will show how these programs are developed and supported by academic recommendations, implemented by health care professionals, and received by the general public.

To reach my research objectives, I shall spend three weeks in July 2016 interviewing NHS health professionals in Manchester and Rotherham and academics at universities in Manchester, Liverpool, and London. I will also assist in academic research on preventive health methods. In addition, I will speak with some NHS clients from various locations in the UK who have experienced the relevant programs. These three perspectives will provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of preventive health programs. They will also raise broader questions and indicate deeper issues for my further research. With the support of the Plastino Scholarship, I will be able to study these aspects of preventive health that are neither available in my academic program nor possible in a classroom setting.

**Alexis Holzmann**

**School Over Summer Vacation: An Opportunity for Collaborative Learning with the Koonwarra Village School**

**Experience Abstract**

Upon departing the University of Delaware at the conclusion of the spring semester, I will embark upon a three-week transformative journey that culminates in a greater understanding of the complexities of democratic schooling through a unique collaborative learning experience. Koonwarra Village School, located in Victoria, Australia, is an alternative primary school that practices a holistic, child-centric approach to education. While these ideals are professed by a plethora of schools around the globe, Koonwarra offers a truly unique array of opportunities for their students including a *Whole School Parliament*, *Out and About Days*, and the *Organic Kitchen Garden Program*. Moreover, the students and staff are commendably consistent in upholding the founding principles of the school and in their complete commitment to the school's vision.

As a future educator, I hope that this trip will commence a life-long intellectual and personal journey, as I discover innovative ways to inspire students and future global citizens. During my time at Koonwarra, I plan to observe daily activities, engage in an active dialogue with faculty and students, and even participate in this unique school to analyze, assess, and identify best practices that I could implement in my own future classroom. The manner in which Koonwarra Village School integrates a child-centric curriculum with environmental stewardship, student leadership, and community involvement is truly remarkable. Although I will be on a break from my own studies at a University, I am optimistic that I have a lot to learn from a small primary school that operates an entire hemisphere away.

**Katie Katz**  
**Oral Rehydration Solutions in Rwanda**

**Abstract**

Many people are surprised to learn that diarrhea is the second-leading cause of death in children under five years old. Diarrheal disease, if untreated, may lead to severe dehydration, fluid loss, and electrolyte imbalance. However, these deaths are preventable and treatable. Oral rehydration solution (ORS) is a combination of clean water, sugar, and salt that replaces the fluids and electrolytes in those suffering from diarrhea. ORS has the potential to save many lives. I plan to travel to Rwanda during August 2016 for approximately two weeks. I will partner with Kageno, a non-governmental organization with a location in the Banda Village that strives to improve life and create opportunities in impoverished communities. I will work with Jeremiah Hakizimana, a leader of Kageno and a trained Rwandan nurse, to travel to the village and hospital and provide education about ORS.

First, I will shadow in the Kibogora Hospital and the health center in the Banda Village in Rwanda to observe their current practices and assess their level of knowledge. Then, I will hold information sessions and distribute flyers to educate people about dehydration and ORS, specifically the mothers of young children. I hope to prevent diarrheal deaths from dehydration by educating parents on recognizing the signs of dehydration in their children, making and using ORS, and understanding the benefits. Finally, I will keep a detailed journal and record video footage in Rwanda to create an awareness campaign about diarrheal deaths and ORS.

**Emily Wunsch**

**Disparities in Health Care: Healthcare Outreach with the Latino Community in the American Southwest**

**Abstract**

Although we may not realize it, healthcare disparities are still prominent in communities across the United States due to a combination of different socioeconomic factors. Specifically, the Latino community has a statistically higher risk for preventable illness and decreased access to healthcare caused by cultural and language barriers. Using my Spanish fluency and passion for public health, I want to help the Latino community overcome these healthcare barriers. The best way for me to achieve this goal is by collaborating with various Latino health organizations. My plan is to travel to the southwestern region of the country to work with organizations in predominately Hispanic areas. In order to do this I contacted three different healthcare centers that focus on Latino community outreach in Oklahoma, Texas, and California.

These three centers include the non-profit sector, a university-affiliated research center, and a large healthcare organization. I will visit each of these centers for a week this summer to assist with community outreach programs, interview staff, and learn about future healthcare initiatives. In addition, I have scheduled interviews with more specialized centers in each area that focus on sexually transmitted diseases, mental illness, and family planning. This will give me more in-depth understanding of key healthcare issues. By focusing my research on preventative health education I hope to gain insight to develop a new program in Delaware focusing on Latino health outreach. As a STAR College of Health Ambassador and a Value Institute Scholar at Christiana Hospital, I have already built connections to help me put my ideas into action. I know that my Latino experience will be not only a self-discovery process, but will also help me give back to the community.