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The Congressional Award Foundation Announces Task Force on Curriculum and Virtual Programming

Education Leaders Unite to Develop Emotional and Mental Health Summer Programs for Students

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 19, 2020 — Today, [The Congressional Award Foundation](#) (CAF), the United States Congress' public-private partnership for young Americans, created the Task Force on Curriculum and Virtual Programming, following the suspension of its annual Gold Medal Ceremony. The task force will provide middle, high school, and college students with at-home resources for emotional and mental health, STEM education, and opportunities to remain engaged in community service. The group is chaired by CAF board member Dr. Linda Mitchell, extension professor and regional extension coordinator, Mississippi State University.

The Congressional Award Foundation Task Force on Curriculum and Virtual Programming is developing content for students and educators alike within virtual learning platforms. The task force recently released opportunities for Congressional Award participants to complete their goals from the safety of their homes with the introduction of [Tools and Tips in the Age of Coronavirus](#) and [Feel Good News: Participants Answering the Call to Service](#). Guest speakers, lecturers, Congressional Award presentations, guidance for effective goal-setting, and opportunities to meet immediate needs through volunteerism are among the programs that will soon be available.

“We are excited to bring together an alliance of exceptional leaders in education to assist in the evolution of The Congressional Award Foundation and how it serves America’s youngest constituents during these challenging times,” said Paxton Baker, Chairman of the Board of The Congressional Award Foundation. “Many of our teens are withdrawing and finding it difficult to navigate through this period of isolation away from friends, sports, and hobbies. There is concern from parents and teachers that students do not have the experience with self-care and methodology to bring joy and passion back into their lives. We are committed to filling that void.”

Among the committee, members include Congressional Award Foundation board of directors and alumni in the education and non-profit sectors: Dr. Brian Johnson, president & CEO, Advance Higher Ed, LLC (Washington, D.C.); Kathryn Weeden, former principal, United States Senate Page School (Washington, D.C.); Laura O’Connor, registrar, Cedar Valley High School (Eagle Mountain, Utah); Mateo Magdaleno, chief education officer, IDQ Group, Inc. (Dallas, Texas); Mitch Draizin, president, CUNY LGBT Advisory Council (New York, New York); and Romero Brown, chief professional officer, Romero Brown Consulting (Acworth, Georgia).

The committee formed in response to the suspension of The Congressional Award Gold Medal Ceremony, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, originally scheduled to take place June 15-17, 2020 at the United States Capitol. The Ceremony traditionally welcomes members of the United States Congress, public and private partners, and industry and civic leaders to recognize gold medalists before an audience of their families and peers in a multi-day event. Last year's ceremony recognized 538 youth across 42 states and territories who logged at least 800 hours of voluntary public service, personal development, physical fitness, and expedition/exploration activities.

To learn more about The Congressional Award or to support the mission during this transition, including donations, please visit www.congressionalaward.org.

About The Congressional Award

The Congressional Award is the United States Congress' only charity and the highest honor bestowed upon a youth civilian through the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Established by Congress as a public-private partnership in 1979 under Public Law 96-114, the program recognizes initiative, service, and achievement in youth ages 13 ½ – 23.

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