

News Release – May 11, 2021

2021 Chapel Hill-Carrboro Peacemaking Scholarships Awarded

Congratulations to four outstanding high school seniors who have been selected to receive **Chapel Hill-Carrboro Peacemaking Scholarships** in the amount of \$1,000 each. This year's recipients are **Katherine Berreth** and **Rebekah Siekierski** of Chapel Hill High School, **Abigail Boyer** (East Chapel Hill High School), and **Julian Taylor** (Carrboro High School). Over the past thirteen years, 30 Peacemaking Scholarships have been awarded to graduating seniors in Chapel Hill or Carrboro who are intending to pursue a college education, and who meet certain criteria. The criteria include activism, academic study, and career goals that relate to non-violent conflict resolution, depolarization, global community, social justice, ecology, and/or population. These students received CH-C Peacemaking Scholarships because of their excellent qualifications, record of study and achievement, strong letters of recommendation, and their desire to pursue careers as peacemakers.



The path to success in formal education for **Katherine Berreth** began in her first grade dual language program (English/Spanish). She relished this experience which increased her desire to understand others, led to her strong interest in multicultural understanding, and began her passion for Spanish study. Her high school participation in Ethics Bowl club taught her the importance of finding common ground in conflict resolution. Her interest in foreign policy education and comparative government led her to begin an organization called "The Little Journalist" that writes weekly news stories on foreign and domestic policy for elementary schoolers. This experience also enabled her to serve as Content Director for the Foreign Policy Youth Collaborative. Serving as a teen attorney for the Teen Court program has helped her identify future goals: the program's focus on restorative justice and its fight against the school-to-prison pipeline kindled her desire to reform the justice system and support previously underrepresented and unsupported communities. She plans to major in philosophy, politics, and economics at the University of Pennsylvania this fall.



Awardee **Abigail Boyer** has lived in Chapel Hill her whole life, and she appreciates the diversity and inclusiveness of this community. While in high school she volunteered with MyVote Project to eliminate barriers to voting, served as Treasurer of the Spanish Honor Society as they raised money to assist their sister school in Nicaragua, and worked part-time at the Clothes Mentor consignment store which encourages recycling and sustainable use of resources. She also is a member of her school's sustainability club whose members renovated their pollinator garden. She participated in peaceful student walkouts at her school to protest against gun violence. She volunteered for the Triangle Land Conservancy by helping prepare the Brumley Forest Nature Preserve for its public opening. Abigail aspires to a career in the health sciences, working directly with patients, doing her own research and teaching others in her field. She plans to attend UNC-Chapel Hill this fall.



Rebekah Siekierski has been strongly committed to social justice and ending discrimination. Since 2017 she has served as a volunteer track and basketball coach for Special Olympics athletes, working to end discrimination against those with disabilities and creating connections between people regardless of ability, race and age. In her 10th grade year she helped expand and strengthen the “Unified Us” club to encourage inclusivity between students who have special needs and non-disabled students. This commitment to social inclusion, regardless of ability, has increased social justice and depolarization at CHHS. Outside school Rebekah has served as vice-president of the Teen Youth Council at St. Thomas More Church, helping plan activities and expand outreach, inviting teens on the sidelines to be more involved. She has participated in summer work camp mission trips to Charleston, SC, and Morganton, NC, helping people in need to live strongly and proudly. She also worked as an Inclusion Counselor helping children with disabilities and special needs participate in summer camps offered by the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department. Rebekah plans to major in the health sciences and obtain a Master’s degree in Occupational Therapy.



During his high school years **Julian Taylor** has focused his energies on social justice and racial equity. As co-founder and vice-president of the Black and Brown Student Coalition (BBSC) at his school he led the group’s efforts to increase awareness of racial inequities, narrow the existing racial achievement gap, arrange free ACT and SAT preparation opportunities, and increase the number of minority students in advanced courses. Julian was a student representative to the school district’s Resource Officer Task Force (created to assess the role of police officers in schools and their impacts on minority students). Outside of school he compiled and shared anonymous stories about discrimination for a webinar discussing racial issues in his neighborhood. As a member of the Chapel Hill Youth Council he was a liaison to the town’s Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board providing a unique perspective on infrastructure projects such as bike paths and bike sharing programs. He will attend UNC-Chapel Hill in the fall and ultimately wants to pursue urban planning with a focus on social justice and ecological sustainability. In addition to awarding Julian this Peacemaking Scholarship, we also congratulate him for being named a Morehead-Cain Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill; this outstanding award covers all expenses for four years of study at UNC. Therefore, Julian has generously asked that we use his Peacemaking Scholarship funds for another future applicant. Thank you, Julian!

Individuals and organizations who wish to support future peacemaking scholarships may contribute financially at any time. Please make checks payable to Peacemaking Scholarship Fund and send them to United Church of Chapel Hill, 1321 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514. The scholarship application form and bios of previous scholarship recipients are available at <http://unitedchurch.org/peacemaking>.

For more information contact:

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