

## **2016-2017 EPL PROJECT SUMMARIES**

### **Upstate**

**Elizabeth Armstrong**  
**St. Joseph's High School**  
**Greenville, SC**

Elizabeth will be working with a charity she started over five years ago called The Love of Giving. She works to help children in two of her local hospitals (Shriner's Hospital for Children and Greenville Children's Hospital) by providing stuffed animals, handmade blankets and books to help ease the stress of being in the hospital.

**Daniel Bacheschi**  
**Southside High School**  
**Greer, SC**

"Story Threader is an initiative launched by Southside High School Senior Daniel Bacheschi to highlight and share the stories of those touched by HIV and AIDS in an endeavor to demonstrate to the youth and population of Greenville the humanity of these victims, and that their intrinsic worth is not in any form diminished by their condition. He will interview HIV/AIDS patients to collect their stories and give a voice to a population hidden just under the cover of an expanding city culture. Daniel plans to publicize these stories on social media platforms in an attempt to reach a wider audience."

**LeAnne Davison**  
**Wren High School**  
**Piedmont, SC**

The Outreach Program for Soccer (TOPSoccer) is a program that builds social and developmental skills in special needs children while simultaneously connecting them with the community--all by teaching them how to play soccer. Local high school and college students will be able to volunteer to help teach the children how to play soccer. These volunteers are called "buddies"; each athlete will choose their buddy at each session. LeAnne's project is to start a TOPSoccer Program in Powdersville, a central location for the surrounding Greenville, Anderson, and Pickens Counties.

**Elizabeth Dunn**  
**JL Mann High School**  
**Greenville, SC**

Elizabeth wants to work with the Frazee Dream Center fifth graders to write their own short stories. They would decorate and create their own book that they would present at the end of the week. The goal is to help them have a better grasp on their understanding of English and feel confident to read and write and move forward in their education.

**Varsha Gopal**  
**Southside High School**  
**Greenville, SC**

Varsha wants to assist the 51 children at A Child's Haven. She plans to raise awareness for the organization using brochures that can be placed in hospitals and local areas that many low income families will see. She also plans to have large scale food drives at her school and other schools. She will encourage middle school students at her school to volunteer and get involved. Student volunteers would help organize products in the Parent Store and clean classrooms to lower cleaning expenses.

**Stephanie Gonzalez**  
**Riverside High School**  
**Greer, SC**

Stephanie has organized a program she is calling *Emerging Bilinguals Aid (EBA)*. This program will assist incoming students learn English and prevent them from failing and/or dropping out of high school. The program will identify new students to the US and pair them with an EBA volunteer tutor. They will meet, determine which classes the student needs the most help on from their tutors, and prepare for exams. They will also learn English at the same time. This program will bring together people from different cultural backgrounds for a great cause.

**Emma Grover**  
**Christ Church Episcopal**  
**Greenville, SC**

Emma will work to support and participate with a medical organization focusing on mental health care in Greenville, SC. She will spend time raising funds and awareness for this program. Her hope is that her contributions, and those of others who become involved, will greatly improve the ability of these clinics to reach and assist the homeless population. The main goal is to provide the health care that is desperately needed by people who normally would not be able to visit a mental health professional.

**Bhumika Jakkaraddi**  
**Southside High School**  
**Greenville, SC**

Bhumika's project will assist homeless students. She will establish volunteer based aid groups in high schools. These groups would establish personal connections with these individuals and provide a support group. Her project is aimed at helping the homeless families specifically at Southside High School. She will be using National Beta Club Members as volunteers for creating care packages and fundraising additional money to aid these students and their families.

**Olivia McGuirt**  
**Mauldin High School**  
**Mauldin, SC**

Last year, Olivia created a Winter Clothing Drive and Winter Tag Sale at Mauldin HS. Items were sold at a Tag Sale for a few dollars and the proceeds were donated to a local after school program that assists low income families. She wants to expand this project and create a model to allow more high school students to get involved and help families in need. She wants to replicate this every year.

**Lauren Xu (Zoo)**  
**Governor's School**  
**Clemson, SC**

Lauren will complete a project called "Better River" through her newly founded Environmental Club at SCGSAH. She will organize groups of students to clean up the waterfall that is polluted, located right behind the backyard of the school. All of the work will be done by students on campus, some of them involved in the "connecting arts through service" club that environmental club is partnering with.

**Midlands**

**Abby Askins**  
**A.C. Flora High School**  
**Columbia, SC**

*The Brockman Mural Project* will involve the painting of a mural promoting gender equality at a Columbia elementary school, Brockman Montessori. The mural will be made up of words the students come up with as part of a group-led exercise to discuss their thoughts on gender relations. The students will be involved in both the inspiration for and creation of the mural. The project will not only encourage discussion and thought on gender equality with the students and teachers, but will promote creativity, community involvement, and a sense of school pride.

**LaDeja Bell**  
**Fairfield Central High School**  
**Winnsboro, SC**

LaDeja has created Reading Tots, which is a program focused on instilling a love for reading in kids at a young age. The program will provide each child entering kindergarten in Fairfield County with a free book. She is currently contacting local businesses for support and will also encourage the students to visit the local libraries in their towns. The Reading Tots program believes that if we can help young kids in our county find their love for reading, it will help our community in the long run.

**Jessica Cole**  
**Chapin High School**  
**Chapin, SC**

In response to a local county's 19% adult illiteracy rate, Jessica created a preventative program to distribute books to impoverished elementary students. Based on previous research which found that children with easy access to books pursue higher education, regardless of economic state or parent education, Jessica focused her program on elementary school students. To address the literacy deficiency within her community, Jessica has created and implemented a book drive known as Booked for Success. Through partnering with the local community, her organization has distributed over 1100 books to children at a local elementary school in Newberry county.

**Mary DeVenny**  
**Lancaster High School**  
**Lancaster, SC**

*Cooking to Connect* is a community based project in which locals of the Lancaster community will share their favorite recipes to create a cookbook. The cookbook will include a collection of recipes from various cultures in the community and spotlight the cook and the traditions related to the dish. After creating the cookbook, Mary will host a community luncheon showcasing some of the featured dishes as well as selling the cookbooks to raise money for The Lancaster area Coalition for the homeless. Her hope is that the cookbook and luncheon will allow the Lancaster community to break cultural boundaries and connect with one another while enjoying something as simple as a meal.

**Brandon Jackson**  
**Spring Valley High School**  
**Columbia, SC**

Brandon plans to teach middle schoolers a little more about their voice, impact, and role in their local community. Through his Boys & Girls Club, he wants middle schoolers to have a dialogue with Law Enforcement, so they know that their voices & opinions really matter. Brandon will organize a panel of different law enforcement departments in the local Columbia area such as Richland County Sheriffs Dept., Columbia Police Dept., and Forest Acres Police Dept. The project will take place on a day where the majority of the school districts in Columbia are out of school, so that Brandon's project will have an impact on the most amount of middle schoolers in his Boys & Girls Club. Brandon will have his middle schoolers create questions to ask before the event happens, and questions will also be answered on site.

**Litzel Martinez-Garcia**  
**Spring Valley High School**  
**Columbia, SC**

Litzel wants to help educate Hispanic students at her school. She will hold a session once a month at her school's library with new students in ESOL. The volunteers will assist new students with their school work and spend more time on material they are struggling with.

Parents can attend these meetings as well to learn about how the school system works. High school students will receive information about credits, careers, scholarships, and colleges.

**Catherine O’Leary**  
**Chapin High School**  
**Chapin, SC**

The Violence Policy Center has repeatedly ranked South Carolina number one in rate of women killed by men, and lack of awareness and education on both dating violence and domestic violence helps to perpetuate this cycle. Catherine has created *Chapin Cares*, a project that will focus on helping women who are victims of domestic violence, as well as educating youth at Chapin High School on the issues of dating violence and domestic violence. The program will host two drives, collecting items such as toiletries, non-perishables, and cleaning supplies. These items will be donated to a local women’s shelter in Columbia, Sister Care. In conjunction with the weeks of these two drives, flyers will be posted around the school sighting statistics on Dating Violence in high school youth as well as statistics on domestic violence in South Carolina. *Chapin Cares* will both support the victims of domestic violence in Chapin Community and work to prevent future intimate partner violence of Chapin High School Students.

**Dennis Patterson**  
**Spring Valley High School**  
**Columbia, SC**

Dennis’ project focuses on teens with autism. Normally, teens have to go through adolescence throughout their high school life, and the teens that I’ll be working are also undergoing autism, which is another challenge for their high school years. He will be partnering with Spring Valley High School’s Circle of Friends organization to help plan a Special Education Prom for these kids who might not seem comfortable in the school environment

**Pee Dee**

**Tazaya Caesar**  
**Kingstree Senior High School**  
**Kingstree, SC**

Tazaya has combined her two passions, dancing and reading, to create her project called *Dancing In the Books*. She will create a dance camp that low income students will attend during the summer of 2017. The camp’s proceeds will be donated to her school’s library. In addition to the camp, Tazaya will also organize a performance utilizing the camp attendees. Tazaya is passionate about improving her school’s library and also plans to hold a book drive and solicit sponsors for donations for books.

**Travis Dias**  
**Wilson High School**  
**Florence, SC**

Travis is developing a mentoring program where students teach students. He has written invitations and will extend them to members from National Honor Society, Academic Challenge

Team, and Math Team soon. He has already partnered with two local organizations to provide tutors for at-risk students. He will recruiting more members throughout the year and form a partnership with Florence School District One to provide tutors to the local intermediate students. He will be focusing on the 5th-8th grade in STEM based subjects. Tiger tutors has also partnered with Girls University to promote STEM based learning in young women. Also we have expanded with Gear Up and the East Glorence Mission to tutor a variety of students. The upperclassmen tutors focus on higher math tutoring such as Algebra and PreCalculus while the underclassmen do Homework Help at the East Florence Mission.

**Jennifer Griggs**  
**Hartsville High School**  
**Hartsville, SC**

Jennifer has developed a program called "Caring Bears and Bingo". It is a Valentine's Days Bingo tournament for the residents of Morningside Nursing Home, while also collecting teddy bears to donate to all of the residents at the Thad E. Saleeby Center. She has been collecting teddy bears and socks at her high school to distribute to the residents at the Thad E. Saleeby Center on Valentine's Day. The goal of the project is to bring the community together for an event to show the residents at the Saleeby Center that the community cares and has not forgotten about them. The delivery of the bears and the tournament will boost the morale of disabled residents that are not able to "go out" and celebrate Valentine's Day. The project will incorporate both the disabled and the elderly community in an event with the community.

**Tyrese Lawson**  
**Scott's Branch High School**  
**Summerton, SC**

Tyrese lives in Summerville, which recently lost its only grocery store. The residents, especially the elderly, do not have the transportation to travel the extra 20 minutes to the closest store. His project called *Harvest Hunger* will focus on a community wide food drive. He will ask three area schools to participate along with local churches. He will also include the school PTO meetings, alumni association, athletic games, and other community programs. He hopes to assist the elderly and many residents affected by the flood or unemployment.

**Lowcountry**

**Caroline Farrell**  
**James Island Charter School**  
**Charleston, SC**

Caroline created *New Links*, which is a program where senior citizens are taught how to operate their own technology. The class will be run by high school students and will address the individual needs of each participant. For example, one may be learning how to use social networks on a desk top, and another could be learning how to take a picture on their smart phone. The classes are not only intended to help them use the technology that surrounds them every day, but also to create new links and relationships between senior citizens and teenagers.

**Dipali Patel**  
**Colleton County High School**  
**Walterboro, SC**

Dipali's project will help children in foster care by making cuddle kits. The cuddle kits will include different things they may need when they go to foster homes. She has a very detailed outline of items needed, how to organize them, and distribute them to the local South Carolina Department of Social Services.

**Caroline Warren**  
**Lowcountry Preparatory**  
**Pawleys Island, SC**

Caroline will assist the Georgetown County ESL and is focusing on reaching out to adults. The program offers free child care so that parents can improve their English. With a firmer grasp of these skills, students can better their lives and the lives of their families, whether it be in the form of applying for a job or being able to assist their children with their homework. She is using a professional presentation board to promote the program and encourages families to participate in these classes and take advantage of these services. She has frequented the Georgetown Middle School to promote her project, and is also reaching out to students at the Howard Adult Center. Her next step is to determine time and location and attend some of the pick-up soccer games in Georgetown and Andrews—where she will support the students while also bringing her board, flyers, and information for anyone who could be interested.