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CONTACT: Alex Jacobs
Marketing and Communications Officer
(858) 279-2740
alex@jcfsandiego.org

Peter Chortek Leadership Award 2020 Recipients Announced

SAN DIEGO, CA – Each year the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego (JCF) facilitates the Peter Chortek Leadership Award, which was created by the Chortek Family to foster Jewish communal involvement by rewarding Jewish teens who are practicing *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world.

The Peter Chortek Leadership Award was established in 2011 by the Chortek Family to honor the late Peter Chortek z”l. Peter was not religious but was fiercely proud of being Jewish and committed to making a difference. His passion and focus were believing that quality Jewish education would help ensure a vibrant Jewish future. For Peter, this meant being supportive of venues that would exude Jewish continuity, such as day schools, Jewish camps, Hillel, Birthright, March of the Living, Jewish Community Centers, and synagogues.

The Peter Chortek Leadership Award recognizes Jewish high school students in San Diego who are making a difference in our community through their innovative leadership. Applicants must 1) Currently be in high school and have organized and led an extraordinary *Tikkun Olam* project that has benefited their neighborhood, community, environment, or world; 2) Demonstrate initiative, passion, and positive spirit, inspiring others to make a difference and creating awareness about their issue, cause, or project; and 3) Have a long-term vision for growth and sustainability for their work and have been involved with their project for at least one year before submitting an application. Competitive applicants for this award will have dedicated significant time and commitment to 1) Creating a new project or program to improve their community or 2) Enhancing an existing project or program through innovation and community building or 3) Inspiring large numbers of their peers to get involved in service projects or social justice programs.

Peter Chortek Leadership Award recipients receive a \$5,400 stipend, \$540 to establish a Donor Advised Fund at the Jewish Community Foundation, and a professional video made about their project. This year the committee chose two recipients for the Peter Chortek Leadership Award. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the annual awards celebration with participants, their families, and community leaders was canceled. Video production was delayed and is currently under development. Past videos can be viewed by clicking [HERE](#).

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Zachary Patterson will be entering his junior year at University City High School. Zachary found that students, the primary stakeholders in education, were missing from education's governing body. He spent three years working with the San Diego Unified School District to create the Student Advisory Board and the Student Board Member position on the San Diego Board of Education. After receiving final approval from the Board of Education, Zachary was elected the first Student Board Member, representing over 100,000 students, a position he will hold until June 30, 2021. Zachary involved thousands of students across San Diego Unified as he created a system that could represent the district's diversity on the Student Advisory Board and participate in the election of their representative. He has also been honored this year as 1 of 15 exceptional teens to be awarded the Diller Tikkun Olam Award.

Jason Wexler, starting his senior year at The Grauer School, created *Answer to Cancer*, a 12-person team of primarily Jewish students from around San Diego, to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Raising \$36,000 last year, this year's Answer to Cancer's goal is to raise \$60,000, and the team has expanded to include 21 diverse students from around the county. Inspired by the death of a friend's dad from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Jason led his team in letter-writing and email campaigns, restaurant fundraiser nights, a raffle at a youth theatre show, and a performance event with over 100 people in attendance. He is currently developing new and innovative ways to connect in light of the pandemic.

Applications for the 2021 Peter Chortek Leadership Award will be available as early as September 2020 and will be due January 2021. Now is the time to start thinking about what you might do to meet the application criteria. Students who meet the criteria are invited to participate in this remarkable opportunity. For additional information on the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego, please visit www.jcfsandiego.org.

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About the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego

The Jewish Community Foundation partners with individuals, families, and community organizations to help them achieve their philanthropic goals. During the fiscal year 2019-2020, the Foundation awarded and facilitated \$78 million in 7,300 grants to more than 1800 Jewish and general organizations in San Diego, Israel and around the world. Since its inception over 53 years ago, the Foundation has granted over \$1.6 billion. Visit the Jewish Community Foundation at www.jcfsandiego.org or call 858-279-2740.