
**Truth Initiative® awards truth IMPACT scholarships to young leaders
making a difference in their communities**

Recipients from across the country are taking action to address youth nicotine use and its impact on mental health, social justice, and the environment

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 8, 2023)- [Truth Initiative®](#), the organization behind the highly effective [truth®](#) youth smoking, vaping, and nicotine public education campaign, proudly announced today the three winners and six honorable mention recipients of its annual [truth IMPACT scholarship](#). These nine young people, selected from an annual application process open to students ages 16 to 25 across the United States, are taking action in their communities to address the impact of nicotine on mental health, social justice, and the environment – all critical issues that are interconnected to tobacco use and vaping nicotine as the youth e-cigarette epidemic remains a serious public health threat. Each winner will receive \$5,000 in scholarship money to recognize and support community efforts, and each honorable mention recipient will receive \$1,000.

The 2022 **truth** IMPACT scholarship winners are:

- Rukaya Alrubaye, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- Alannah Dalton, Rochester, New York
- Davida Padi, Parsippany, New Jersey

The 2022 **truth** IMPACT honorable mention recipients are:

- Karely Alcantara, Silver Spring, Maryland
- Kacey King, Atlanta, Georgia
- Etana Morse, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- Zina Ogunnaya, Carson, California
- Kimberly Ortiz, Washington, D.C.
- Nikolaos Rivera, Fort Wayne, Indiana

All of the young winners and honorable mention recipients are already [taking action](#) to help end youth nicotine use for good. The scholarship funds will further their education as they work to lead and inspire others in their communities especially regarding improving the availability of mental health resources for young people, the state of social justice in their community, and limiting the impact tobacco products have on the environment.

“We are pleased to honor nine exceptional young people who serve as inspiring examples of their generation’s fight for healthy communities and a better future,”



said Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative. “Youth nicotine use has personally affected each one of their lives, and now they are using those experiences to make a positive impact. We are so proud to honor them as this year’s **truth** IMPACT scholars and honorable mention recipients, and we look forward to working with them in lifting up their voices as they do the hard work to end tobacco use in their communities.”

E-cigarette use among young people remains a serious public health threat. The latest National Youth Tobacco Survey shows that over 2.5 million high school and middle school students currently use e-cigarettes. This is especially troubling given that nicotine can worsen symptoms of [anxiety and depression](#) in addition to the physical health risks associated with its use, a fact called out in the [Breath of Stress Air](#) youth education effort from **truth**.

As a former e-cigarette user, 21-year-old IMPACT scholarship winner **Alannah Dalton** knows first-hand the impact of vaping nicotine. She quit using e-cigarettes and is now an advocate supporting actions to protect young people from the risks of nicotine addiction and inspiring other young people to quit.

“I believe that youth tobacco use needs to be addressed to begin eliminating addiction for the generations following myself,” said Dalton. “Ending nicotine addiction must begin somewhere and addressing youth tobacco use now serves as an excellent place to start!”

Another scholarship recipient this year, 20-year-old **Davida Padi**, described how nicotine and tobacco use are critical to addressing youth mental health and social justice.

“Addressing youth tobacco use is critical for improving young people's mental health. Similarly, it is vital to examine youth tobacco use through the lens of health equity and equality,” said Padi. “Tobacco use disproportionately affects low-income and marginalized communities. Combating youth tobacco use in these communities can aid in the promotion of health equity and the reduction of health disparities.”

17-year-old scholarship recipient **Rukaya Alrubaye** noted her goal of using the funds to further her prevention efforts in her Fayetteville, AR community. As well as to eventually become a surgeon and use her skills to provide affordable healthcare to disadvantaged people in third-world countries. She added, “We



must work together to stop tobacco usage so that the next generation can grow up in a world where a life is more important than an industry.”

Resources to help those looking to quit

Truth Initiative provides support and resources designed specifically for young people to help them quit e-cigarette use through its award-winning and lifesaving nationally recognized **truth** campaign. More than 500,000 young people have enrolled in [This is Quitting](#) from **truth**—a free and anonymous text message quit vaping program for teens and young adults. A randomized [clinical trial](#) found that young adults aged 18-24 who used This is Quitting had nearly 40% higher odds of quitting compared to a control group. For help with quitting vaping, teens and young adults can visit thetruth.com or text “**DITCHVAPE**” to **88709** for free resources.

truth also offers a free, comprehensive digital curriculum, [Vaping: Know the truth](#), that gives students the facts about the health dangers of e-cigarettes, its impact on mental health and the help they need to quit. Parents and educators can learn more about the curriculum at: Truthinitiative.org/curriculum.

Take action and learn more

Anyone can join **truth** in taking action to address mental health, social justice, and the environment as it relates to youth nicotine use.

To learn more about the annual **truth** IMPACT Scholarship, the **truth** Changemaker Award, or get involved with **truth** visit thetruth.com/takeaction.

About Truth Initiative®

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine and a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are a thing of the past. In 2020, we celebrated 20 years of saving lives and preventing millions of youth from smoking. Our impact has helped drive the teen smoking rate down from 23% in 2000 to under 3% in 2021. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized truth® public education campaign. As youth e-cigarette use threatens to addict a new generation to nicotine, we are leading the fight against tobacco and nicotine addiction in all forms. Our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco, and innovation in tobacco dependence treatment are also



helping to end one of the most critical public health battles of our time. Based in Washington D.C., our organization, formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more, visit truthinitiative.org.

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