

ANN INC. and Vital Voices Award Twenty ANNpower Project Grants to Emerging Female Leaders
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- ANNpower Project Grants to Fund Community Projects Designed to Initiate Positive Social Change -

NEW YORK, Sept. 17, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- ANN INC., the parent Company of Ann Taylor and LOFT, and Vital Voices Global Partnership are honored to announce the 2013 ANNpower Grantees, a Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action. The young women represent a diverse group of high school students who are committed to driving positive social change in their home communities.

As part of the ANNpower Vital Voices Leadership Forum last spring, the ANNpower Grantees were provided with leadership training and mentorship from women leaders from the Vital Voices Global Leadership Network, as well as executives from ANN INC. Armed with this knowledge, they developed projects that will make a significant difference in communities across the country and received ANNpower Project Grants to bring their ideas to life. The funded projects address a wide range of critical social issues today, from promoting sustainable living choices through recycled art, to providing mentoring and networking workshops, to increasing female participation and interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields at an early age.

"We are so proud to invest in these incredible young women who are starting to establish themselves as strong, confident leaders within their communities," said Kay Krill, President and CEO of ANN INC. "We look forward to empowering each of these young women to cultivate and grow their unique voices and passions as they set out to make their first of many imprints in the world."

The 2013 ANNpower Grantees awarded are:

- **Anjana** from **Shorewood, Wisconsin** who is educating girls about the importance of gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals.
- **Alexandra** from **Stamford, Connecticut** who is creating a store for low-income families in her community, called *Handled with Care*.
- **Carolina** from **Centreville, Virginia** who is creating mentoring and networking opportunities for teen girls in her community.
- **Charlotte** from **Leavenworth, Washington** who is working to promote sustainable life choices through art projects using recycled materials.
- **Neha** from **Fort Pierce, Florida** who is creating a series of workshops for middle school girls, stimulating their interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.
- **Rabiah** from **Cordova, Tennessee** who is launching a mentoring program for teen girls who are refugees to the United States.
- **Ariela** from **New Haven, Connecticut** who is instilling the importance of education and a healthy lifestyle in young Latina girls through the Girls Boxing Club (GBC).
- **Abriana** from **Villanova, Pennsylvania** who is launching a pen pal and cultural exchange program between students at her high school and Darfuri refugees in Chad through an online platform.
- **Lindsay** from **Quincy, Massachusetts** who is instilling confidence and empowering girls in her community through leadership development workshops.
- **Laura** from **Tallahassee, Florida** who is planning to organize a major event to bring awareness to the issue of human trafficking.
- **Jane** from **Oberlin, Ohio** who is sparking interest in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) among young girls.
- **Nadyah** from **Bel Air, Maryland** who is supporting the creation of a community learning center in Sri Lanka by working with students in her high school to collect supplies and raise awareness of global issues surrounding girls in developing countries.
- **Alisha** from **Bellevue, Washington** who is working on an online community of mentors and students that uses a crowd-sourcing model to deliver content that builds technical prowess from an early age.
- **Abigail** from **Leonardtown, Maryland** who is working to address the increased risk of drowning for socioeconomically disadvantaged children and Amish children through Swimming Safety School (3S).
- **Elizabeth** from **Greensboro, North Carolina** who is creating mentoring relationships between girls starting middle school with girls about to finish high school.

- **Drucila from Bronx, New York** who is creating a documentary telling the stories of individual people who have overcome personal challenges.
- **Laura from San Antonio, Puerto Rico** who is partnering with the Department of Education to implement her campaign to prevent child abuse in 30 public and private schools throughout Puerto Rico.
- **Karly from Vero Beach, Florida** who is using some of the recycled tennis balls she collects through her nonprofit Balls Go Round to create holiday ornaments for American troops stationed abroad.
- **Molly from Waltham, Massachusetts** who is setting up an "imagination station" of non-electronic toys and games for children in long-term care at the hospital.
- **Shivonne from Palo Alto, California** who is building an online community to discuss global women's issues and creating a speaker series for girls in her community to gain exposure to established women leaders.

Through these projects, the ANNpower Grantees are creating a ripple effect of change that is estimated to positively impact more than 5,500 members of their collective communities throughout the country each year. "I truly believe in the ripple effect. If my project inspired even one or two girls to pursue their passions, then it was a success. They will grow up and pay it forward, inspiring other girls to do the same," said Monica Mishra, a 2012 ANNpower Fellow and Grantee, who is expected to speak about her experience with the ANNpower Initiative together with Kay Krill on September 25 at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting.

The ANNpower Project Grants are awarded based on a comprehensive review process of the project proposals by ANN INC. and Vital Voices leadership, as well as the newly appointed ANNpower Advisory Council, comprised of influential women leaders in media, business, and entertainment.

"These young women are part of a powerful network of peers that will emerge together to blaze the trail as the next generation of leaders," said Alyse Nelson, President and CEO of Vital Voices. "We are honored to partner with ANN INC. to invest in the visionary plans of these impressive young women and look forward to all they will accomplish."

To learn more about the 2013 ANNpower Grantees, the ANNpower Vital Voices Initiative, or the ANNpower Fellow application process, please visit ANNpower.org.

About the ANNpower Vital Voices Initiative

The ANNpower Vital Voices Initiative is a groundbreaking partnership between ANN INC. and Vital Voices Global Partnership to empower young women from across the U.S. with the leadership skills they need to affect global progress, invest in their communities and begin their journeys as the next generation of leaders. ANN INC. has committed to invest more than \$1.3 million over a four-year period in the ANNpower Initiative through its ANN Cares charitable platform. The ANNpower Initiative aims to provide leadership skills and mentorship to 50 ANNpower Fellows annually and is designed to positively impact more than 5,500 members of their collective communities throughout the country each year.

As part of the Initiative, the ANNpower Advisory Council was announced at the 2012 Clinton Global Initiative as a "Commitment to Action" and is comprised of influential women in media, business, and entertainment who have displayed exceptional leadership. Members of the Council review, score, and recommend outstanding grant proposals as well as serve as mentors to the Fellows and ambassadors of the ANNpower Vital Voices Initiative to the public. The Council continues to be developed and currently includes award-winning actress Kate Hudson, actress Jennifer Morrison ("Once Upon a Time," "House"), Anne Fuluwider, Editor-in-Chief of Marie Claire, Shelly Lazarus, Chairman Emeritus and former CEO of Ogilvy & Mather, Kay Krill, President and CEO of ANN INC., and Alyse Nelson, President and CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership. Visit ANNpower.org for more information.

About ANN INC.

ANN INC. is the parent Company of Ann Taylor and LOFT, two of the leading women's specialty retail fashion brands in North America. As of August 3, 2013, the Company operated 1,007 Ann Taylor, Ann Taylor Factory, LOFT and LOFT Outlet stores in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Canada. Our Ann Taylor and LOFT brands are also available online in more than 100 countries worldwide at AnnTaylor.com and LOFT.com. Visit ANNINC.com for more information (NYSE: ANN).

About Vital Voices Global Partnership

Vital Voices Global Partnership is a leading non-governmental organization that identifies, invests in and brings visibility to extraordinary women around the world by unleashing their leadership potential to transform lives and accelerate peace and prosperity in their communities. Founded by Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 1997, the organization trains and mentors women leaders as agents of transformative change in economic development, human rights and political participation. The Vital Voices Global Leadership Network includes more than 14,000 leaders representing 144 countries who have trained and mentored 500,000 additional women and girls in their communities. Visit vitalvoices.org to learn more.

About the Clinton Global Initiative

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), an initiative of Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation, convenes global leaders to create and implement innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. CGI Annual Meetings have brought together more than 150 heads of state, 20 Nobel Prize laureates, and hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations and NGOs, major philanthropists, and members of the media. To date CGI members have made more than 2,300 commitments, which are already improving the lives of more than 400 million people in over 180 countries. When fully funded and implemented, these commitments will be valued at \$73.5 billion.

CGI also convenes CGI America, a meeting focused on collaborative solutions to economic recovery in the United States, and CGI University (CGI U), which brings together undergraduate and graduate students to address pressing challenges in their community or around the world, and, this year, CGI Latin America, which will bring together Latin American leaders to identify, harness, and strengthen ways to improve the livelihoods of people in Latin America and around the world. For more information, visit clintonglobalinitiative.org and follow us on Twitter [@ClintonGlobal](https://twitter.com/ClintonGlobal) and Facebook at facebook.com/clintonglobalinitiative.

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