

Certificate of Accomplishment

Anurithi Senthil – William Penn Charter School

Anurithi Senthil is a sophomore at William Penn Charter School whose sponsor described her as an incredible human being, a thought partner, and a leader. Anu has made a difference in her school by engaging in difficult discussions about race with both her peers and adults, and she has done so with compassion and respect.

Following the deaths of several unarmed African-American young men, Anu wanted a forum in which to discuss these issues. She raised the idea with her classmates and together they brainstormed about what they could do to create that forum. Anu explained that her goal was to educate her school community about racial injustice as well as to understand the thought process of the police officers involved in these events. The students decided to commence a dialogue with the Philadelphia Police Commissioner's Office. The correspondence culminated in Commissioner Ramsey's accepting the students' invitation to speak at their school.

Anu and her classmates planned the event and facilitated the discussion with the Commissioner, which was attended by the students and faculty of the Upper School. The students asked Commissioner Ramsey what their school could do to help and the Commissioner encouraged the students to stay involved and understand that racial injustice is not someone else's issue, but everyone's.

In that spirit, Anu made sure that the discussion at Penn Charter did not end with this event. The students planned and facilitated several follow-up discussions after the Commissioner's visit. In addition, Anu founded a Diversity Council to create a safe space for students to voice their concerns and plan activities to address those concerns. There is little doubt that Anu's efforts to advance the discourse around race and social responsibility at her school will have a lasting impact on her community.