

## **Enhancing the Experience of Underrepresented Vermont High School Students in STEM**

USA

Skidmore College

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### **Section 1: Narrative**

a. A two-sentence summary of the goals of your project:

Through service learning opportunities in Vermont, my project aims to encourage underrepresented high school students, first-generation students, and students that come from low-income families in Vermont to not only help further their education but to be able to explore the future science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-based healthcare career paths.

c. How did you come up with the idea for your project?

My project was inspired by seeing a lack of diversity in STEM fields in the state of Vermont.

e. Why did you choose your host site to work in?

I chose the host site in Vermont because I am from Vermont and all the students that participated are also from the area.

a. What was it like to work in your host site?

Working in my host site was amazing. I was able to work with great people in my area that are now friends for life.

f. Did you feel at any point that the project was not going to work? In what ways?

Due to the fact that my original project was canceled because of the pandemic, I had to reimagine my project. I felt that my new idea would also be denied because of the pandemic.

g. What were the challenges you encountered in communicating with people?

I was fortunate to have my team all in the same area so communicating was not a problem.

h. How do you define peace?

I define peace as the ability to pursue and have access to information and knowledge without any barriers.

i. How does or will your project contribute to peace? Short-term? Long-term?

I believe the future success of my project will have a positive change in the way students perceive STEM fields. My project will increase the number of students to pursue STEM related fields and also increase attendance of post-secondary education.

a. Please describe changes created by the project during the summer?

My original project was different from the project I did this summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was supposed to bring two underrepresented students from Vermont to Uganda with a non-profit called Imaging the World. Instead of doing that, underrepresented students in Vermont participated in many things that they would have done in Uganda like interview doctors, giving back to the community, and learn more about STEM fields.

b. How did you advance your projects goals despite these challenges?

I was fortunate enough to have a hard working team that never gave up on me or my vision.

i. What advice would you give to future PfP grantees given the pandemic-related challenges you experienced?

Never give up. All the work you are doing will impact someone's life in a way that you might never know. Changing even one life is worth all the time you are putting into your project.

c. If you were able to implement your project remotely, speak to the highlights and challenges of conducting a remote project

Half of my project was unfortunately done remotely. The highlight of going remote were that we could connect with people on the other side of the world in seconds. We could also meet safely without the worry of getting sick. The challenge of going remote are that it's not as engaging.

Section I: Narrative (continued)

I. At the end of your narrative, please provide a one- to two-sentence personal statement, suitable for use as a quotation, addressing how and why this project was valuable and what was the most important thing you learned as a result:

"People of all ages have seen unbelievable events take place this past year. Every day people watch the news hoping for a break from all the bad things that keep stacking up. We have all felt hopeless at some point trying to make a change. I want to personally thank PfP for providing hope, creativity, and peace during this time and for years to come."

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## Section 2: Photographs

