



2022 Recipient ~ Julia Flood
Rye Neck High School, Class of 2022

During high school I spent many afternoons volunteering at *The Sharing Shelf*. The Sharing Shelf was founded to address clothing insecurity and meet the basic material needs of low-income children and teens in Westchester County. While at the Sharing Shelf, I learned that many teen girls in the neighboring communities were unable to afford basic feminine hygiene products. These products are a health necessity in a teenage girl's life and unfortunately, they are not covered by *SNAP*, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Without access to these products, many girls have to miss school each month. When I learned this information, I could not believe it. I realized that access to health products is something I have always taken for granted. As a result, I wanted to do something about this issue, not only to raise awareness, but to try to help.

I spearheaded a long-term project to raise awareness of this issue, utilizing social media, flyers, and personal outreach. I set up Amazon wishlists, collected funds, purchased products, and gathered supplies from others in my community. These efforts allowed me to create over 1,200 feminine hygiene product kits that contained enough product for a month along with new underwear, and hand written notes. These kits were then distributed to young, underserved teens in my community with the help of *The Sharing Shelf* I was able to put in several hundred hours into this project and I still continue to work on it today. This experience opened my eyes to the many obstacles (even simple hygiene) that many young women face in trying to get an education. This also reinforced my desire to attend a college that offers opportunities to continue community service - especially efforts focused on helping women. I suspect the very same lack of affordable access to hygiene products exists in other communities.

St. Vincent's Hospital's mission of Charity and Excellence in healthcare truly resonates with my community service project. I believe that to be a part of a community, a person should be willing to help others. The project challenged me to ask "why are poor women disproportionately impacted by a lack of access to health products?" I'd like to continue my project in the future to help girls in places other than my hometown community.