



**2022 Recipient ~ Netra Easwaran  
Horace Greeley High School, Class of 2023**

As an individual passionate about literacy, I am a firm believer in the idea that education should be a right and not a privilege. My role as Head of Tutoring Services for the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization Youth4Better, has provided me with the opportunity to counteract the achievement gap and learning barriers exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By collaborating with parents to assess student needs, develop tailored lesson plans, and provide direct instruction, I was able to help students navigate a new academic environment and keep pace with their peers. The pandemic had an overwhelming impact on mental health, and the social and emotional isolation experienced by many students contributed to a dwindling sense of focus and motivation. Given this, my tutoring sessions aimed to reinspire curiosity and a love of learning within students while simultaneously equipping them with the tools to successfully adjust to the unfamiliar setting of virtual learning. A majority of the students I worked with were in elementary and middle schools across both the East and West Coasts, and I found that although remote learning was a novel experience, the kids seemed more than eager to adapt to their "new normal." This campaign was especially reflective of Saint Vincent's mission of shared ministry, as I encouraged my students to adopt a growth mindset that values the process over perfection, and underscores the value of taking risks, accepting failures, and learning from mistakes.

Another volunteering campaign I was heavily involved with was making holiday cards for veterans, which were distributed to the James Peters and Northport Veterans Affairs centers. The holiday season is often seen as a time of joy and gratitude, and these cards were a medium of expressing my appreciation for the heroism and resilience demonstrated by veterans as they risked their lives to keep our nation safe.

I also participated in Youth4Better's Heritage Revival Campaign by conducting pro bono dance classes. Although having received the prestigious YoungArts National Merit Award, I am someone who values community impact over accolades. As an Indian classical dancer, I consider my art form as a means through which I can remain connected to my cultural roots. By conducting classes that focused on the spirituality of dance theory and choreography, I was able to emphasize connections to a greater Indian heritage.

My engagement with these three campaigns translated to over 250 hours of service, for which I received the Gold President's Volunteer Service Award.