

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes individuals who have made a difference to the Cupertino community through volunteer service. **To nominate someone for this award, please answer the following questions:**

1. What contributions did this individual make to Cupertino through volunteer service in 2019?

Ankit has been volunteering for past three years. He is founder of organization "Education Everywhere"

<https://reuseschoolsupplies.org>

Ankit has been an active Scout for almost 10 years now. As he started exploring what service project he should take up for his Eagle Scout rank, he realized that he could help many other school kids while also working on a service project. He wanted to collect lightly used school supplies and reuse or recycle them. With this goal in mind, he created an organization called "Education Everywhere". He received funding for his idea by receiving \$100 grant from Start A Snowball organization

The creation of the organization and running it successfully took perseverance. He had to overcome obstacles at every stage and find answers. Initially, all he had was an idea.

He had seen many times that as school year ends and new school year starts many children want new school supplies and old school supplies are thrown away. At the same time, there are many places and schools where children do not have access to good quality school supplies and they can use these lightly used school supplies. This motivated him to start the organization.

The next step was to spread the word. He sent emails to around 30 school principals from elementary and middle schools in Cupertino and Sunnyvale school districts explaining his project and if they could support him. He got positive response from 12 schools. He created flyers and posted flyers on weekends and weekday evenings in school campuses.

He put the bins for collection in school offices for 4 weeks before final day of school. He also contacted local public libraries. Cupertino library agreed to keep bins and flyers posted for a month. He timed the library drive to be

one month after school ended so that when parents are cleaning up closets, they would be able to drop them off at library.

On the last day of school, he collected all these bins and honestly he was overwhelmed with response he got from all schools. His home garage just overflowed with donations.

The next phase was sorting, cleaning, arranging. He persuaded and recruited some of his friends to help him during the summer holidays. It took 3-4 iterations to sort these supplies as crayons, markers, pens, highlighters, folders, books, pencils, erasers, office supplies, tape glue, staplers, etc. Supplies were of 3 categories: new, light used and some old.

He reached out to local schools and schools overseas and donated school supplies. During his research, he found another volunteer organization that recycles crayons and redistributes them to hospitals. So, from the sorted half-broken crayons, he donated 50 pounds of crayons to The Crayon Initiative in Danville, CA.

He recruited Adhya Kasamsetty (Lawson Middle School) and Anish Lakkapragada (Miller Middle School) to join his organization in 2019 and team successfully ran fundraising again in 2019

2. What has been the impact of their contributions and how has it addressed a community need?

Ankit's organization has donated school supplies worth \$20000 over past two years at various locations.

Below is summary of growth of organization

Year 2018

Schools partnered: 10 (City Cupertino)

Supplies collected: \$5000

Supplies donated to

1. Schools in Senahu Guatemala – Ankit went on FHE Family Humanitarian Expedition with group <https://www.familyhumanitarian.org/about/> and participated in school building, home building activities in June 2018
2. Family Giving Tree
3. East Palo Alto Charter School
4. Crayon Initiative <https://thecrayoninitiative.org>
5. Schools in Senahu Guatemala – Sent donation through volunteers going on FHE expedition in December 2018

Year 2019

Schools partnered: 30 Cities Cupertino, San Jose, Sunnyvale, Palo Alto , Evergreen, Los Altos

Supplies collected: \$15000

Supplies donated so far

1. School Late Anantrao Pawar Memorial English Medium School in India operated by Akanksha Foundation <http://www.akanksha.org> June 2019
2. Local Schools – Baker Elementary School <https://baker.moreland.org>
3. Almaden Elementary School San Jose <https://almaden.sjusd.org>
4. Marianao Castro Elementary School <https://castro.mvwsd.org>
5. Schools in Senahu Guatemala – Sent donation through volunteers going on FHE expedition in December 2019
6. Crayon Initiative <https://thecrayoninitiative.org>
7. A. P Model School Hyderabad India

Distribution is still in progress

3. How does this person exemplify the spirit of volunteerism?

As a Boy Scout Ankit has volunteered at RAFT organization <https://raft.net> and also at Second Harvest Food Bank <https://www.shfb.org>.

For his Eagle Scout Rank, he is required to complete a service project helping community. When Ankit came up with this idea he did not restrict

himself volunteering only for the project for Eagle Scout. But he converted idea into volunteer organization. Through emails and personal meetings, he reached out to school principals in various school districts for collection. He recruited volunteers from his scout troop 400 to help with sorting of supplies. He on boarded Adhya and Anish to help him expand the organization work. He planned growth of the organization and came up with the model to reach out more number of schools for collection and donation. He maintains contact with his donor schools and partners providing them updates on activity. He has spent hours to reaching out schools, posting flyers, collection of bins , sorting of supplies and finding venues for donation. He has been doing these tasks by effectively managing time along with his studies in High School. Ankit has vision to grow organization with local chapters in different school districts so that work continues even after he joins University post his High School graduation.

Ankit was awarded Outstanding Youth Citizen award by Rotary Club of Sunnyvale, in recognition of my non-profit organization

He was awarded Service Leadership pin at a Symposium held in Foothill College, Los Altos, CA to recognize local youth who are leading community development efforts. He presented his journey in starting Education Everywhere and the skills and values he learnt through the process.

Ankit was also selected into a 25-member unpaid volunteer team from over 150 applicants in Cupertino City Leadership in Training Program where he learnt valuable leadership skills in supervising and managing younger children at summer camp.