Jason Heo '15 Receives OZY Genius Award
https://vimeo.com/123682441

From a pool of hundreds of applicants from around the world, Jason Heo '15 was awarded an OZY Genius Award to grow his Lang Project, “Farepath.” Farepath is a technology-focused mechanism for increasing food access and promoting neighborhood civic engagement. Building upon and extending Peter Norback’s “One Can a Week” program, Farepath is a data-driven organization which uses technology in the form of a smartphone application to enable higher levels of donor engagement and participation. The GIS-based technological platform allows donors to view a summary of their donation history and where the food items go, and it allows donors access to this information for their own tax returns. By further developing mapping technology through mobile applications, there is great potential for creating communities of altruism throughout areas of the country where the model can be learned and applied, repeatedly. Since 2012, Farepath has been supported by over 55 unique donor households across 15 streets. In total, it has contributed over 2,500 pounds of food to the Chester Eastside Ministries food pantry. As a member of the inaugural class of OZY Genius Award recipients, Jason will receive a stipend of up to $10,000 to pursue his project and will be part of an OZY Films documentary this fall that chronicles the award recipients' progress.

Chester Children's Chorus (Slideshow)

The Chester Children's Chorus (CCC) was founded in 1994 by former Swarthmore College Associate Professor of Music and recent honorary degree recipient John Alston. It uses choral music as a way to offer young people, from kindergarten through high school age and who live in the Chester–Upland School District, the opportunity to expand their intellectual and cultural horizons and strengthen their life skills. Swarthmore College supports CCC through a wide array of in-kind support, including the provision of dedicated space year-round for its administrative offices and space for its summer program for approximately 150 children daily in the Lang Music Building. Since its founding 21 years ago, hundreds of volunteers from across Swarthmore College – including faculty, staff, and students – have worked with thousands of Chester youth during the academic year programs and summer program.

Photo Credits: Jonathan Hodgson, Andrea Knox, and John Wehmiller
Youth Courts: Disrupting the School–To–Prison Pipeline

Chester Youth Court Volunteers (CYCV) -- a recepient of a grant from the Project Pericles Fund of Swarthmore College -- disrupts the school–to–prison pipeline in Chester, PA by shifting from a retributive model of justice to a model of restorative justice. Zero tolerance policies have greatly increased the population of students of color being subjected to a punitive system of accountability and discipline. Students are removed from their classes for minor offenses either temporarily or permanently through detention, suspension, and expulsion. The forced removal from the traditional school environment creates a negative relationship between the impacted students and their school community.

CYCV aims to keep students in school through positive peer pressure and mentorship. The principles of restorative justice aid CYCV in this work--students learn to identify the harm a student offender or respondent inflicts upon themselves, their peers, school faculty/staff and their communities more generally. Instead of pushing a student out, CYCV aims to reintegrate that student into the school community by allowing students to take responsibility for their actions and work toward addressing harm and rebuilding relationships. The entirely student–led court builds relationships between students by showing participants that they care, are willing to listen, and are committed to repairing the harm that a practice of subtractive or unresponsive schooling can create in a student's life.
Since its founding, CYCV has trained hundreds of students who now have ample knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of youth court as well as an understanding of the principals of restorative justice. CYCV leader Ciara Williams ’16 writes, “The culture and mission of Swarthmore College is to encourage students to think critically both locally and globally. Directly and indirectly, we are taught to live for a purpose greater than ourselves. At Youth Courts, we feel inspired by giving students a space to do the same. Not only are these students engaged in work that makes their school a more positive and supportive experience for their peers, they are also gaining a literacy that will lead them to think more deeply about the linkages between schools predominantly of color, the juvenile justice system, and the prison industrial complex.”

Philadelphia Inquirer Article about Youth Courts