

Positive Impact Awards

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Select a category:

Professional Empowerment: Individuals who use their leadership to support career development initiatives in their community

Please describe in detail your nominee's specific accomplishment and what was involved in achieving it. Be sure to include the dates of the activities.

I am truly delighted to write a recommendation letter for Dante Alvarado-Leon. I've known Dante since the fall of 2015, when we first met at a leadership program focused on underrepresented, low-income and undocumented students - "The Greenlining Institute's Casa Joaquin Murrieta Leadership Academy". The program consisted of 30 students but I distinctly remember Dante as being the most energetic, humble, and funny student out of all of us. What made him different from other students was his passion for making social impact. As we shared our values, I remember him saying that impact, learning, and giving back were three of his core values. I knew that his passion for making a change lead him to be a leader in the world and positively impact our community.

Since I met Dante, I've seen him work day in and day out to create products that will uplift our communities. He genuinely does it out of the goodness of his heart. I have never met anyone who cares so much about giving back to our community and helping low-income students reach higher education. Dante constantly tries to help incoming freshman to find their place here in Berkeley. Everyday, he's telling me about a new student who is confused about which major to pick and how he is going to have lunch with them to introduce them to the campus. He has at least 8 mentees that he checks in on a monthly basis, whether it is a text message, call or coffee he makes sure to know how his mentees are doing. I know he cares about helping students reach their potential.

As I got to know him better, I noticed that Dante didn't care about recognition, he cared about the success of others, even if that meant to put his own success on the line. What I mean by that, is that he would rather go talk to a student in need than do his own homework. I honestly, don't know what it is inside him that drives

him to keep doing social impact projects for the benefit of his community when he doesn't receive anything in return. I can honestly say he is one of most selfless individuals I have ever met. One thing is for sure, he works really hard to provide for both his family and his community, and he really enjoys it. I believe he was born to be a leader, and I know that Dante will accomplish great things in life because he has one thing that not many people have, and that is infinite motivation and drive. I myself sometimes struggle to find my drive, but not Dante. Dante is an incredible human being and I believe he deserves to be recognized. It is almost hard to describe him, because he is so unique that one has to meet him to truly know him and feel how much impact he wants to make in the world. But it wasn't always so easy for him, and despite all the obstacles along the way he still has the fire to keep going and be the best he can be. Being the only boy in his family, he has spent a lot of time alone and isolated. He, like many low-income students, has had to navigate his way through the educational journey.

Since his freshman year, Dante began planning to start a social impact project. The first one was an online platform which sought to connect nonprofits with companies to provide resources for underprivileged communities through CSR. He then went onto intern at Facebook over the summer of his sophomore year, as a business student. Working over summer didn't stop him from starting his second social impact project, MentorRoom which seeks to connect students with professionals for mentorship. His junior year was when I had the pleasure to meet him and when he told me about his idea. Entrepreneurship was a different idea for me to think of but Dante showed me the great opportunities that comes with creating your own project. School alone is difficult enough but Dante had to balance out being busy pitching, raising money, and building the product for his passion to come true. He wants others to have the opportunity that he had growing up which is to have a mentor who believes in you.

I believe that Dante deserves this award because he tries to have continuous impact, not only in his immediate community, but around the world and he gets nothing out of it financially.

Moreover, he is also very accomplished. Dante received the Dean Seed Fund from the Haas School of Business for his startup project MentorRoom. Within the Haas School of Business Dante is very cherished by the advisors because of the continuous events that he hosts to speak to incoming freshman. He has had the opportunity to pitch in front of the Haas Board with MentorRoom and has received great feedback from the CEO's of companies like Levi's and Facebook.

But even with all the wonderful projects that Dante has done, he still faces many rejections from accelerators, scholarships, entrepreneurship programs, and job opportunities. He constantly tries to get into a program that will help continue his

idea but it is unfortunate that he has not received a chance to see his idea of "Mentorship for all" a reality. Despite all of this, Dante is very positive and always says that better opportunities will come, but I know that it hurts him not to get accepted to programs for MentorRoom. He has put so much work into everything he does, and cares a lot about our community. "Sometimes it's the very people who no one imagines anything of who do the things no one can imagine." Dante is humble, driven, and passionate about providing opportunities for the next generation of leaders. He is even part of a group of community champions called - "We are America," lead by Sarahi Espinoza Salamanca working on initiatives and spreading information to undocumented students and Latinos around the nation to keep our community informed and safe during the Trump presidency. This is why I believe that Dante deserves to be recognized for his ambitious projects that seek to uplift the Hispanic community. At a very young age, he has already had a great impact and I believe that now it is time for us to help him.

Please describe their impact, potential impact and how they have inspired others.

Dante has impacted the lives of thousands of students, engineers, and professionals directly through his work, mentorship, and leadership. He founded MentorRoom which through he created a google mentorship program for students in UC Berkeley. He connected 50 UC Berkeley students with 50 Google Mentors. Being part of his team, I saw first hand the numerous duties that Dante took on. He lead the vision for the program, recruited students to help us with the program, and constantly reached out to professionals to make this program happen. He focused on low-income, underrepresented students and provided them with a mentor that would help them reach their dreams. More importantly, he is a strong advocate of equal opportunity and over 52% of the students in the program were women.

While working at Facebook he created an Impact Summit Conference where he brought low-income, underrepresented students to Facebook so that they would be exposed to the world of tech and get inspired that one day they may also be working there too. He impacted the life of over 50 students who came to visit Facebook. He also lead the pilot for the LOFT Coder Summit at Stanford University - bringing together over 300 Computer Science students, Latinx Professionals in the Tech and Venture Capital Industry, and Community Champions for a day of networking, fun, and learning.

In addition, he lead a multiple coding classes for young students in San Jose throughout his college career. He would travel every week after class for three hours on the Caltrain to get to his students. He taught a workshop called Coding Jam at the Consulate of Mexico in San Jose where he exposed 40 young middle schoolers to the world of Computer Science. He led a Code as a Second

Language (CSL) Coding Jam for over 35 middle school students in the Bay Area in collaboration with Salesforce's Latinoforce and the leadership of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation.

Moreover, Dante helped lead a STEM TechPrep event at Oakland Technical HS for 20 young african american middle school students and parents. The helped both parents and students get exposed to the world of computer science.

To conclude over the last year Dante has spoken at diversity panels like the Latino-Latina Role Model Conference - Speaker on Tech, TeenTech SF Global Conference - STEM and Social Impact Panel, William C. Overfelt High School STEM Panel, Mt. Diablo High School Higher Education Panel, NCLR Conference Panel Speaker on Getting Latinos in STEM, and Helping Parents Prepare their Students for success in CS and Higher Ed.

When MentorRoom launches, Dante hopes to reach the lives of over 10,000 students all over California and beyond. I want to help him see his dream a reality, and I hope that you may help us too. Thank you!

Please describe the moment or situation that motivated your nominee to take action.

I believe Dante has always has a passion for making social impact but it was not until his freshman year of college where he decided to take on bigger projects that would impact more people. Entering college helped him realize that there is a bigger need for mentorship than he had imagined. Meeting first generation college students through classes, clubs, and conferences and hearing their stories about how much they were struggling with college drove him to embark on such projects over the course of his college career. He himself struggled in college as a freshman. He was confused over what major he should pursue and believed that he wanted to do Computer Science, but it was very difficult for him. When he would fail an assignment or do bad in his class he would be very disillusioned and because there was no support that kept him hopeful he decided to change his course. He doesn't want other students to struggle alone and that was a big factor in his decision to create MentorRoom.

Please describe those characteristics that set your nominee apart from others

What makes Dante exceptional is that no matter how many times he gets rejected, criticized, or fails he will always get up and get back to making a change in the world. It is not just a phase in his life, but it is who he really is. He will continue to create projects that help communities for the rest of his life because that is truly what he is passionate about. He mentioned to me that he hopes to

one day be the President of the United States, and I truly believe that he can accomplish anything he sets his mind to.

Please describe the impact that recognition will have on your nominee, their cause, and those they help.

Being recognized for The Positive Impact Awards will without a doubt help Dante in his cause of providing mentors for all. I believe that this recognition will allow him to get opportunities that he has often been denied from. It will provide him with the credibility that he is a true leader and hopefully allow him an entrance into programs that will help him accelerate MentorRoom.

In addition, I believe that it is the perfect time to recognize Dante for his efforts in helping our community because now more than ever, we need to inspire other students to make a change in the world. By allowing others to see Dante as a leader, he can become a resource to others and I'm sure he would be more than happy to help them.

If you would like to share any websites or online articles about your nominee's activities, please enter up to 3 links here.

<http://poetsandquantsforundergrads.com/2016/09/22/best-schools-college-startups/>

<https://www.facebook.com/medasf/videos/10153703582269178/>

<http://www.telemundo.com/noticias/2015/10/07/estudiantes-hispanos-trabajan-para-superar-la-brecha-en-el-mundo-de-la>

<https://www.mentorroom.org/aboutus/>