

L.A. TEEN STARTS NON-PROFIT FOUNDATION TO ADDRESS RACISM EMBEDDED IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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[/Einpresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- Starting a foundation is no easy feat for anyone, especially for a [teenager](#), but the injection of a little youthful exuberance is exactly what is needed in the nonprofit section. The Destiny Education Project (<https://www.thedestinyeducationproject.org/>) is a BIPOC-led 501(c)3 founded in the fall of 2021 by 16-year old Burbank-CA based Destiny Helligar as a solution after being attacked with racist slurs in her middle school in 2018.

Thanks to her bravery and compassion, several school districts are taking a closer look at their curriculums, their policies, and themselves.

The Destiny Education Project's mission is in empowering school boards, teachers, administrators, and parents to elevate public education by disrupting educational models based solely on productivity, progress standards, and quantitative assessment models for learning. They name the [racism](#) embedded in these features of their educational model. They name the colonial and racist legacy embedded in curriculums and throughout public educational institutions.

In 2018 while an eighth-grader in Jordan Middle School in Burbank, California (then 13-years old) Destiny Helligar became the target of racist attacks by multiple fellow students, one who used the N-word, which he said he learned from reading a required book by the school and the Burbank Unified School district. Left traumatized by the attacks, Destiny together with her



Destiny & Co-Founders Nadra Ostrom, Carmenita Helligar and Polly Stenberg

mother and dozens of other parents challenged both the school and the district. Destiny's story was captured in the Los Angeles Times on November 12, 2020.

(<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/books/story/2020-11-12/burbank-unified-challenges-books-including-to-kill-a-mockingbird>).

As a result of Destiny's voice, five books that were part of the school's curriculum have been put on hold, she helped facilitate the school's Indian mascot signage being covered up, she donated \$1,000 to John Muir Middle School to purchase books that are more diverse and inclusive, she began a peer to peer, reading group, where high schoolers read books to elementary school students, she raised over \$3,000 for the Black Student Union (BSU) at John Burroughs High School, she joined the nonprofit "Opportunity Exposed" to host its HBCU Week and this week Destiny is donating \$1,000 to Edison Elementary School to purchase books. She is currently working on "Custodial Appreciation Day" – a recognition event scheduled for May 2022. As an additional nod, she received acknowledgment from California State Assemblymember Laura Friedman (AD-43). A drop the mike moment!



Destiny Helligar,
Founder of The Destiny
Education Project

"I'm proud to be on the front lines of [schools](#) finally being required to acknowledge, address and eradicate systemic racism and inequality from their curriculums. If I prevent other students from experiencing racism, I will have made a difference" states Destiny.

The Destiny Education Project is creating a community of lifelong learners by funding ongoing professional development programs for teachers, administrators, and speakers for school events. To be spearheaded by a 16-year-old, their work is vast but at its core, it is diversifying and decolonizing school curriculums to ensure a broad(er) range of historical perspectives to appropriately represent diverse student bodies and society.

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Destiny Helligar

Co-founders for The Destiny Education Project are Nadra Ostrom, Carmenita Helligar (Destiny's mother), and Polly Stenberg. These women have created a village of support

for Destiny and other families.

They also advocate for increasing teacher salaries and help provide funding for teachers seeking additional degrees in areas of social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. To date, they have

raised \$11,000. As well as supporting the Burbank Unified School District's vision of anti-racist policy in classrooms and campuses, they support students and families who have experienced racism in school by pursuing clear processes for accountability and restorative justice among school boards and unions.

The Destiny Education Project is currently working with the Burbank Unified School District to update the CORE curriculum and has shared its voice with the district's Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) committees.

This extraordinarily compassionate and talented teen is no newcomer to being resourceful. At the age of 11 Destiny created an all-natural skincare line because she couldn't find products for her sensitive skin (<https://localascanbee.com/collections/vendors?q=afterlite+bodycare>). Destiny is the product of a super supportive, entrepreneurial family of high achievers. With her determination to make a positive difference and her winning spirit, Destiny's future path is well destined!

Visit <https://www.thedestinyeducationproject.org/donate> to learn more about and donate to The Destiny Education Project.

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