

Dr. Crystal Cavalier Named Finalist for Rachel's Network 2025 Catalyst Award

Honoring her leadership protecting sacred lands, clean water, and community health through 7 Directions of Service.

MEBANE, NC, UNITED STATES, October 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Rachel's Network, a national community of women environmental funders, has announced the recipients and finalists of its prestigious 2025 Catalyst Award, which honors women of color advancing transformative solutions for a just and sustainable planet.

Now in its seventh year, [the Catalyst Award](#) recognizes women leaders of color who are reshaping the environmental movement — advocating for clean air and water, building a green economy, protecting sacred lands, and strengthening community health and resilience. The award includes financial support, leadership development, and national recognition to help sustain their impact.



Crystal Cavalier

Among this year's six finalists is Dr. Crystal A. Cavalier-Keck (she/her) of Mebane, North Carolina — a citizen of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Co-Founder and CEO of 7 Directions of Service, and Chapter Director of the 17 Rivers American Indian Movement (AIM). Dr. Cavalier-Keck is the first woman to hold this AIM leadership position in North Carolina.

"I believe that our relationship with the land is sacred and that communities—predominantly Indigenous and historically marginalized ones—deserve clean air, drinkable water, and a future free from environmental destruction," said Dr. Cavalier-Keck. "This recognition honors the ongoing work of our ancestors and communities who have long protected the rivers, forests, and sacred lands of the Southeast."

The Catalyst Award, established in 2019, highlights women of color who carry forward Rachel Carson's legacy. Each honoree receives a \$10,000 personal prize, a \$5,000 well-being stipend, and, where applicable, a \$10,000 organizational grant. The award aims to address philanthropy's persistent racial and gender funding gap: less than one percent of foundation giving goes to



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Dr. Crystal Cavalier

women and girls of color, and organizations led by people of color receive under one percent of multiyear operational grants.

Through her leadership with 7 Directions of Service, Dr. Cavalier-Keck advances Indigenous-led environmental justice and Rights of Nature advocacy across North Carolina and the Southeast. Her work includes protecting sacred burial grounds, opposing fossil fuel pipelines, supporting community health initiatives, and training

youth and land defenders through culturally grounded education.

“Crystal, like all finalists and awardees, embodies the spirit of Rachel Carson — grounding her advocacy in science, Indigenous knowledge, and deep moral responsibility to the Earth,” said Rachel’s Network during the 2025 Catalyst Award ceremony.

About Rachel’s Network

Rachel’s Network is a nationwide community of women environmental funders inspired by the legacy of Rachel Carson. The organization supports women-led ecological solutions through strategic grantmaking, mentorship, and leadership development. Learn more at rachelsnetwork.org.

About 7 Directions of Service

Founded in 2021, 7 Directions of Service is an Indigenous-led grassroots nonprofit based in Mebane, North Carolina. The organization protects land, air, water, and sacred sites through advocacy, education, and community organizing grounded in traditional ecological knowledge and the Rights of Nature movement. Learn more at www.7directionsofservice.org.

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