



For Immediate Release

Contact: Gabby Farina

Phone: (610) 506-1099

Email: [newvoterscomms@gmail.com](mailto:newvoterscomms@gmail.com)

<https://www.new-voters.org/>

## Conestoga High School Alum Leads National Youth Voter Engagement Efforts

*Jahnavi Rao's New Voters 2020 Expansion*

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (June 23, 2020)—On the morning of Wednesday, June 10, recent 2018 Conestoga High School graduate Jahnavi Rao's national nonprofit [New Voters](#) was named the recipient of \$10,000 from Harvard's [Social Impact Fellowship Fund](#).

In 2016, Jahnavi Rao was a junior at Conestoga High School where she was the President of Saving a Variety of Endangered Species (SAVES), a member of National Honor Society, the Music Flute Section Leader, and a teenager on the verge of founding a national nonprofit organization. As Rao's junior year came to an end, she reflected on the pivotal events of the past year — Donald Trump had been elected president, the Brexit referendum had shocked the world, and the Orlando nightclub shooting marked the [deadliest](#) mass shooting in United States history at that point in time.

As Rao looked at these events and at the feelings of helplessness that were circulating around Conestoga High School, she knew that she had to take action. So at the end of her junior year in the spring of 2017, Rao founded a club called New Voters and organized a series of voter registration drives where she registered over 85% of her class to vote. This high school club has grown into a registered 501(c)(3) nonpartisan organization with 100 chapters in 27 states across the country with the goal of educating and empowering young people and ensuring that politicians are held accountable by young voters for their legislative decisions.

Today, Rao is a rising junior at Harvard University and the President of New Voters where she works tirelessly with a team of 6 directors, 30+ interns, and various high school student leaders across the nation. The organization's national reach has expanded dramatically, spreading its

message through strong partnerships with organizations such as High School Democrats and Republicans of America, March for Our Lives, and National Honor Society. Such connections propel the central New Voters mission of registering 100,000 students to vote by the 2020 election.

New Voters' expansion continued on Wednesday, June 10, when it was named the recipient of \$10,000 from the Social Impact Fellowship Fund at Harvard Innovation Labs. This fund was established by Alexander Navab in 2019 to support Harvard student-led ventures by helping them accelerate and advance their expansion in social impact sectors. New Voters will use the fund to improve low-income outreach, ensure registered new voters actually vote, and expand administrative support to ensure continuity of all drives and partnerships. Specifically, it will allow Rao's work to continue to empower youth voices from all communities and ensure long-term nationwide social impact.

As Rao notes, "Now is the time where every dollar goes even farther in achieving our goal of amplifying the youth voice. The 2020 election has more youth interest than any election prior. The recent national outcry for Black Lives Matter has young people yearning to make a legislative difference. And students staying home for COVID-19, if they are fortunate, have more time and interest to engage in politics. The confluence of all these factors have led to New Voters having 100 times greater exposure, with one of our recent Instagram posts breaking 37,000 likes and being viewed by over 200,000 people."

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