

Needham Youth Services

December 2016 RAY of Hope Recipient

Nicole Luka



Left to right: Jon Mattleman, Director at Youth Services, December RAY of Hope Nicole Luka, Needham Business Representative Mark Silverman, Marks Moving and Storage

December 2016 Recipient – Nicole Luka

Nicole is a senior at Needham High School. She was nominated by Karen Mullen for the work she does in SALSA (Students Advocating Life Without Substance Abuse). Nicole has been participated in SALSA for the past four years and has been a member of the leadership team now for her third year. "I knew she would make a wonderful member of the SALSA Leadership team and invited her to join the team as a sophomore in high school. "My instincts were correct", States Karen Mullen. "Nicole has been a fantastic leader and role model for her peers as well as for the Pollard School students". As a leadership team member Nicole actively recruits new member; helps organize substance free events for NHS students such as the 5th Quarter winter coffee houses featuring live music. This substance free event takes place after all home football games.

Nicole goes to the Middle School and gives presentations to the 8th Graders about the negative effects of substances and how to say 'no' to them. She has done around 100 hours of volunteer work for SALSA. She has participated in the filming of Needham Schools Spotlight for the Needham Channel and "Safe Celebrations for Prom and Graduation." Nicole has received the Norfolk County Award for Volunteer work in Needham in Youth Substance Abuse Prevention. She is a part of SEAL (Social Empowerment Active Listeners) since 2014. "We provide an outlet for marginalized students to discuss issues and experiences. And we gave a presentation to the English department about the lack diversity in the schools' book curriculum, which provoked the all school read of *The Other Wes Moore*." confirms Nicole.

Some of Nicole's other accomplishments are the National Honor Society (2015-present) where she has participated in various volunteer activities, including: tutoring several students, collecting food for a Food Drive, and bake sales. She is part of GALS club (Girls Achieving Leadership and Service) where we bring awareness towards female injustices and organizing feminist events, and she was elected chairman for the annual GALS GALA. Nicole created her own club called "The Rising Hearts Club" where our mission is to help clothe children and adults in rural poverty stricken countries. This Valentine's season we are focusing on helping rural Poland. She is the senior president of UNICEF club, where she is in charge of organizing and planning meetings, events and activities. "I am very thankful for all of the wonderful opportunities I have had to help make Needham and other communities a little better," states Nicole

Watch the ceremony honoring Nicole at: <https://youtu.be/LlunY6J6Z9I>

For more information please visit www.needhamma.gov/youth/ray