



New Canaan Public Schools  
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## New Canaan High School Junior Awarded Congressional Honor



New Canaan High School junior Henry Benton (pictured) has earned The Congressional Award for his volunteer work with youth in southern Los Angeles.

New Canaan, CT (December 16, 2019). Henry Benton, a junior at New Canaan High School, has been awarded the *Congressional Award*, the United States Congress' award for young Americans. In the spring, Representative Jim Himes will present the award in recognition of Henry's service to the community.

Henry is receiving this award for his work with the Sola Investment group in Los Angeles. The mission of the Sola I CAN Foundation "is to inspire South Los Angeles youth 5-18 to see possibility and opportunity in their lives." The foundation actively seeks volunteers who want to reach out to the distressed community of South Los Angeles. Henry saw an opportunity to teach kids, who qualify for free lunch and whose families have very little money, how to invest in the stock market. Sola was impressed with Henry's idea, and together they reached out to a group of kids ages 7-15. Henry designed a program he called, the Mock Stock Trading Challenge ([www.mockstocktrading.org](http://www.mockstocktrading.org)). Through a series of weekly classes, Henry taught the kids about stock market basics, and set them up on a virtual trading floor.

For Henry Benton, volunteering comes naturally. "I have always liked helping out in the community and have been involved with it since I was nine years old," he said. "I volunteered at the library. Then, I started volunteering at the Waveny Care Center, working with some of the residents to get them on Facebook, so they could communicate with their families in between visits."

"I started 'Mock Stock Challenge,' to teach students about investing," Benton said. "I set them all up with profiles, and we did a simulated three-month trading class. The foundation provided them with iPads, so that I could communicate with them when I wasn't there."

Benton stayed in touch with his Mock Stock Challenge team and continued communicating with them after he returned to New Canaan. "I would video chat with them. And every week or two, I'd send them an update with a new skill, buying, selling, shorting, covering futures options, all of that. And by the end, the winner was up around \$100,000 in fake money. And the winner was awarded some money from the Sola Impact Foundation to start a real portfolio."

NCHS Principal Bill Egan recognizes Benton's financial acumen as well as his overall character. "He's got a quality skill, but to step forward and volunteer to help kids is an amazing thing. I think we're fortunate here at New Canaan High School, where we have many students who are doing excellent volunteer work. But clearly, Henry went above and beyond to be awarded the Congressional Medal. I couldn't be prouder."

Benton would like to continue the program he started in California this summer, and, at the same time, start the Mock Stock Trading Challenge at the Connecticut-based regional non-profit, *Horizons*. "I love stock markets," Henry added. "I've been running my own portfolio since I was around nine years old. I was able to buy my car with the money I've made so far."

According to its website [www.congressionalaward.org](http://www.congressionalaward.org), the Congressional Award is a program that provides a structure for young Americans to learn the value of service, personal development, fitness, and citizenship through character forming experiences that shape tomorrow's leaders and our country's future. The Congressional Award program is promoted throughout America by members of Congress, who share with their constituents a unique opportunity to provide today's youth with the tools they need to thrive as adults.

The Congressional Award is non-competitive. Recipients do not win the Award; they earn it. The Congressional Award teaches participants to set and achieve personally challenging goals that build character and foster community service, personal development, and citizenship. The only other medal awarded by the United States Congress is the Medal of Honor.

The Congressional Award was established in 1979 by Public Law 96-114, The Congressional Award Act as a non-partisan platform to recognize youth achievement. A public-private partnership, The Congressional Award Foundation is an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that receives no federal funding.

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