



The Maddy Institute

The San Joaquin Valley – Inspiring Public Leadership

ANNOUNCING THE 2019 WONDERFUL PUBLIC SERVICE GRADUATE FELLOWS

Program Recognizes Three Scholars for their Significant Achievements in Public Administration and Regional Planning

Fresno, CA (September 24, 2019) – Now in its fifth year of investing in the next generation of San Joaquin Valley leaders, *The Wonderful Company* and *The Maddy Institute* announced the winners of the 2019 *Wonderful Public Service Graduate Fellowship* today. These Fellowships, totaling \$137,000, are made possible by the generosity of Lynda and Stewart Resnick, co-owners of *The Wonderful Company*.

The *Wonderful Public Service Graduate Fellowship* provides financial assistance for Valley students to help them obtain an advanced degree from a top graduate program and then return to apply what they have learned to help make the San Joaquin Valley a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

The nominating process involved three levels of review. It began with The Maddy Institute seeking recommendations and accepting applications from universities, think tanks and honors programs throughout the United States. All applicants had to have achieved a minimum overall GPA of 3.0, been accepted into a top graduate degree program in fields such as Public Policy, Public Affairs, Public Administration, Urban Planning, an MBA program with a focus on public management or a related field for the Fall of 2019. Successful applicants were then required to participate in two panel interviews prior to being selected.

For more information on the Wonderful Public Service Graduate visit [HERE](#).

Introducing our 2019 Wonderful Public Service Graduate Fellows



Benny Corona

Benny is pursuing a Master in Public Policy at UC Berkeley’s Goldman School. Benny was born and raised in the Central Valley’s Lindsay, CA. He grew up accompanying his parents to work as a farm worker on school breaks. By the age of 13, Benny had the capacity to double his family’s income in the fields.

In 2010, Benny enrolled into UC Berkeley as the first person in his family to attend college. In 2015, he graduated with a B.A. in Anthropology with highest honors for his thesis work titled, “The Growing Voices in the Courts: Free Legal-Services and Immigrants Accessing Justice”.

In the past few years, Benny has worked as a farm worker, community organizer, community development specialist, and political campaigner. His work is focused on the issues of humane immigration reform, environmental advocacy, and water access. His contributions include working in a director role of a nonprofit whose staff produced 8,200 voter registrations, programming the first





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community air monitor in Kings County's Avenal, CA, and managing the grant application and implementation of 3.3 million in funding for wastewater infrastructure in Kern County.

After obtaining his Master in Public Policy, Benny is committed to continuing his service to Central Valley communities and to helping solve some of the region's most pressing public policy issues.

Manpreet Kaur Sandhu

Manpreet is pursuing a Master of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She was born and raised in Bakersfield and carries her Central Valley roots with great pride and affection. She is a proud alumna of Bakersfield's public schools, completing her undergraduate degree at UC San Diego in Political Science and Ethnic Studies with a minor in Law and Society.

Manpreet founded the Jakara Movement's Kern County chapter, becoming the first community organizer in the region and creating a forum for long-neglected Punjabi Sikh youth voices to be valued, amplified, strengthened, and organized.



She helped register hundreds of new voters, penned op-ed pieces in the Bakersfield Californian, worked to reform school district policies, advocated for greater language access through state legislation, and has been a primary driver in preparation for Census 2020 in Kern County. She has opened new vistas for the Punjabi Sikh youth of the region through championing immigration rights, educational justice, neighborhood empowerment, youth leadership, community organizing, and civic engagement. Inspired by the rich tradition of social justice in the Valley, Manpreet seeks to emulate a commitment to advocacy, activism, and organizing, in building the legacy for the Sikh Punjabi community of California.

Empowered by Kern County and the Central Valley, upon graduation Manpreet is eager to return home bringing back with her the lessons learned to better inform policy and decision-making.



Samantha Santamaria

Samantha is pursuing a Master of Social Work with a focus in health, mental health and disabilities from Columbia University, in New York City. Samantha was raised in the small town of Lindsay in Tulare County. She went on to pursue her bachelor's degree at the University of California, Berkeley, which she completed in 2016.

During her time as an undergraduate student, Samantha served as a health educator for socioeconomically disadvantaged schools that lacked health education. She also partnered with an anti-trafficking organization to develop a





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44 lesson girls' empowerment curriculum which is now being used in 5 high risk counties as a trafficking preventative tool.

Samantha's experiences range from working with inmates at San Quentin Prison, day laborers in Oakland, California, and disadvantaged youth with mental health issues. Her international work experience includes working in Nepal to help develop a project that provides counseling, rehabilitation, skills development, and vocational programs to victims of sexual exploitation.

After receiving her bachelor's degree, Samantha took on the role of an administrator for a group home/shelter for commercially sexually exploited children in Bakersfield, California. She plans to return to the San Joaquin Valley upon completing her master's degree with the hopes of addressing mental health access barriers in the community.

About The Maddy Institute

The Maddy Institute was established to engage, prepare and inspire the next generation of government leaders and civil servants. Activities primarily focus on Citizen Participation, Policy Analysis and Leadership Training. Leadership Training programs consist primarily of an extensive government intern program for college students throughout the Valley, as well as the *Wonderful Public Service Graduate Fellowship*. To learn more about The Maddy Institute, visit www.maddyinstitute.com or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About The Wonderful Company

The Wonderful Company is a privately held \$4 billion global company dedicated to harvesting health and happiness around the world. Its iconic brands include FIJI Water, POM Wonderful, Wonderful Pistachios & Wonderful Almonds, Wonderful Halos, Teleflora, JUSTIN Wines, JNSQ Wines and Landmark Wines.

The Wonderful Company's connection to consumers has health at its heart and giving back in its DNA. The company has a long-standing commitment to corporate social responsibility, including more than \$300 million invested in environmental technologies and sustainability research, \$50 million in charitable giving and education initiatives every year, \$100 million toward the construction of two charter school campuses in California's Central Valley, and innovative health and wellness programs, including two new, free primary care clinics for employees and their dependents.

To learn more about The Wonderful Company, its products and core values, visit www.wonderful.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

