

**1. What were the objective and the goals of the project/endeavor? How do they reflect the mission of the Council?**

Paige Carbone worked over the past year to help Cranford High School abandon a decades-old tradition of wearing gender-specific graduation gowns and pioneered the process towards adopting a single universal graduation gown. This endeavor was born from a spirit of being inclusive towards all students, particularly those who struggle to identify with gender openly or prefer not to choose. This has been a battle for years typically due to timing, but Paige seized the opportunity early on in the year and worked with our school administration as well as alumni to help this become a reality for the class of 2021.

**2. Describe in detail your plan. What successes and challenges did you face in implementing your plan?**

The biggest challenge for this endeavor was timing and community support. There was resistance from the community. Backlash was heard because some felt the Class of 2021 was forced to endure too many changes this year and it could wait. During the Winter PTA Meeting, Paige gave a passionate speech to the most well attended PTSA meeting in history. The high attendance was a direct correlation to the Principal's announcement of a school wide vote result in favor of adopting the new universal graduation gowns. Paige spoke fearlessly and defended the need for this change now more than ever and many hearts were swayed.

**3. How did you succeed in creating a culture of upstanders in your school?**

Paige saw the need for a change and worked tirelessly to make that change a reality. She attended Cranford High School administration meetings, Board of Education meetings and PTSA Meetings in order to explain to anyone who was on the fence about the need for this change and how much good it would do for our

students and community. Her courage and fortitude demonstrate what it means to be an upstander. A person who stands up for what is right, what they believe is needed and what is necessary for all people to be safe, included and celebrated.