

## Young Citizen of the Year Nominee: Anya Sengupta

Nominators: Shay Debnath, Bob Kaehms, Vijji Suryadevara, Vijay Ramalingam



I would like to nominate Anya Sengupta for the 2020 Dublin Young Citizen of the Year award. Anya started a kitchen garden in 2020 as a hobby, which helped during pandemic when the stores were closed. Anya donated her surplus produce to her neighbors when online groceries were slow to deliver and hard to get a spot. Later she was inspired to donate food to her local food bank. She reached out to local Tri-Valley residents through neighborhood social networks and the response was very warm. Her food drive has been responded very well by generous residents sending her emails to arrange porch pickups. Local food pantries are a significant way of connecting home-based food growers to food banks, soup kitchens, and service organizations that accept fresh produce. Hunger insecurity is one of the biggest issues facing the nation in this pandemic, and I am proud

that Anya has devoted herself to using her hobby as a passion to power social good within the community.

Anya Sengupta who is Dublin High School Student has done some commendable work during 2020 to help families in need during the COVID time. Anya started a garden blog around April, right after the pandemic started, to create a community of food growers. She had enough food at the beginning of the pandemic to give away to neighbors and friends and, ultimately, she started organizing a weekly food drive in Dublin to donate to a local food pantry in Pleasanton, which was quite helpful as the pandemic led to so many people losing jobs.

It would be my pleasure to nominate Anya Sengupta for the 2020 Dublin Young Citizen of the Year award. Anya's interest in gardening led her to start a kitchen garden in 2020. Just when she started having the produce in abundance, the pandemic hit with lot of stores closing, while the online shopping had long delivery times. Anya started providing the surplus food to her neighbors. As the pandemic intensified, Anya started donating the surplus produce to the local food bank at Valley Bible Church, Pleasanton. Realizing the increasing need from the food bank, she started to run weekly food drives in her local community. She soldiered on to create a virtual garden club along with a blog to promote gardening to hit the milestones of promoting the growing of food as well as self-sustainability.

<https://anyasengupta1022.wixsite.com/anyasecotips/post/stand-against-hunger> During the Hunger Action month of September 2020, she stepped up her efforts to fight food insecurity. In spite of her course rigor, she was a constant presence for the picking and dropping off food, all the while following strict pandemic safety protocols. Her selflessness was evident when she taught my neighborhood kids to grow food and promote weekly drives to donate to the local

food pantry. Her extensive use of networking tools and social networks to further her cause was commendable. This involved consistent food porch pickups through regular emails and using Nextdoor app to communicate and make announcements to her neighborhood about her cause. It is very exciting to see a student like Anya taking the initiative to care and enrich her community by bettering people's lives.

I met Anya Sengupta in Fall 2017, when I coached her seventh-grade basketball team. From then, Anya has displayed her consistent work ethic and leadership skills. As a hard worker, she would always come in before practice working on the fundamentals of basketballs like ball handling and shooting free throws. Her improvement led to her becoming one of our main starters and leading scorers. At the end of the season, her teammates voted and awarded her as Most Inspiring Player due to their admiration of her work ethic and Anya's willingness to help them become better players. I would be thrilled to nominate Anya for the 2020 Dublin Young Citizen of the Year award. Although COVID-19 has intensified World Hunger, this has been a persistent crisis in prosperous and impoverished countries. In 2020, Anya provided her responsibility toward ending food insecurity. What began as her own simple garden became spacious garden beds that supplied the community with all the surpluses. In early 2020, Anya formed her online garden club and blog with the community where she initially shared suggestions and lessons she learned in her progress to becoming a natural food grower in blog format. Primarily, she would use her platform to share her produce with her neighbors and others in the community. She wanted to use her blog in a significant way by contributing her extra produce to a substantial cause. After discovering Valley Bible Church's food pantry, she was determined to help and volunteer by involving her blog members. Anya utilized her website to coordinate food drives from the local residents where she would collect from others' front porch and unload the produce at the food pantry. The outreach from her blog extended outside of Dublin, as members across the world contributed by generously donating toward the cause. This last summer, she reached out to me about creating an environmental sustainability club at Dublin High School to promote sustainability and using DIY technology in the garden beds. Anya's overwhelming enthusiasm and dedication to the community and the food banks would make her an excellent nominee for the Dublin Young Citizen of the Year Award.

I am excited to nominate Anya Sengupta for the 2020 Dublin Young Citizen of the Year award. Global hunger is one that has afflicted millions around the world. The current pandemic has exacerbated it even further. Anya's efforts to address this basic yet paramount issue has been an inspiring story for me. From the humble beginnings of a kitchen garden that she had setup last year, I have witnessed how she handled the surplus produce that eventually blossomed into a multitude of efforts to promote her cause. Anya started with giving away the surplus produce to her neighbors. She started to explore ways to expand her contribution. This led her to volunteer and run weekly food drives at the local food bank at Valley Bible Church. September 2020 was Hunger Action Month. In spite of the school rigor, she promoted and picked up food from her entire community and dropped off at the food bank. To maximize her

reach, she started to effectively manage the social platform capabilities such as Nextdoor and Monthly Action blogs. I vividly recall the instances where people halfway across the planet reached out to her, after reading her blog, to improve ways to fight for her cause. Her leadership skills were also evident when she took my fifth grader son under her tutelage and taught him to grow and care for plants to promote sustainability. From my perspective, this is a vital link in teaching the next generation about the food they eat and how they can contribute to society and lead meaningful lives. With such passion, commitment and the drive, there is not an iota of doubt in my mind that she is a deserving candidate for the 2020 Dublin Young Citizen of the Year award.