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NYU challenge aims to encourage social change

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(U-WIRE) NEW YORK -- New York University will kick-off its "Be a Changemaker Challenge" on Thursday, providing students with \$1,000 grants to launch their own social initiative to benefit the local community.

The **Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation** Program in Social Entrepreneurship, a scholarship program designed to encourage students to pursue leadership in public service at NYU, joined forces with Youth Venture, a national organization that aims to help students plan civic-minded projects, to create the challenge. The program calls for undergraduates to create action plans that aim to tackle issues of community, education, poverty or another one of their choosing. These areas can be addressed by student-created organizations, programs or businesses.

"The door is wide open," Reynolds director Gabriel Brodbar said. "It's really only prohibited by the imagination of the students."

Brodbar said the program was created to bring social entrepreneurship and the resources to carry it out to the entire university. It also aims to make students aware that they can start their own campaign for change.

"The program was created to provide an opportunity for any at NYU to pursue their vision of change," Brodbar said.

Youth Venture executive director Gretchen Zucker said NYU is a school that embraces social entrepreneurship and is also supportive of the endeavors of undergraduates. Zucker said the goal is for this type of work to take root at the university.

"The hope is that social ventures become a part of the fabric of NYU," Zucker said.

Students who are interested in participating in the program must sign up for one of two "Be a Changemaker" workshops offered on Nov. 9 and 16 during which they will learn about the program and Youth Venture. They will also be taught about how to form teams and prepare action plans.

Tisch junior Tamara Porras plans to take part in the program to connect with students who have similar interests and who want to act on them.

"Youth don't have enough of a voice, but are producing amazing work and should have a space to get their work into the world," she said.

After completing a workshop, participants will present their action plans before a panel, which will select winning teams to receiving the grants.

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