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Fifteen Young Social Entrepreneurs Join the Summer Advantage Team through Inaugural Fellowship Program

-Partnership with Ashoka's Changemaker Campuses Creates Pipeline of Social Entrepreneurs-

Fifteen emerging young leaders are working to build the infrastructure of one of today's most promising education initiatives from the bottom-up, creating a pipeline of entrepreneurs in the education sector in the process. Having launched its Fellowship Program in the fall of 2009, Summer Advantage USA identified select students from a variety of fields, including graphic design, education, policy and business from institutions including Harvard University, the University of Chicago and Princeton University. The Fellowship Program provides outstanding educational and professional development opportunities for current undergraduate and graduate students, as well as recent graduates, in order to help Summer Advantage reach its goal of providing research-based summer learning programs to 100,000 children annually. From diverse educational, professional and personal backgrounds, Fellows rally around their passion for children and their belief in the power of summer learning to improve children's lives.

As a nationally recognized leader in the field of education, Summer Advantage USA founder and Ashoka Fellow, Earl Martin Phalen, brings almost two decades of experience leading a large-scale, high impact education enterprise and aims to develop a pipeline of social entrepreneurs through leadership opportunities at Summer Advantage USA, including the Fellowship program. According to Rohini Thukral, a member of the Inaugural Cohort and Master of Public Policy candidate at the University of Southern California, "through Summer Advantage's Fellowship Program, I have not only deepened my commitment to ensuring all children have access to the highest quality educational opportunities, I have also learned critical skills to help me succeed as a leader. Through this role, I have joined a broader community of changemakers who are improving children's lives."

As a next step in this effort, Summer Advantage USA has partnered with AshokaU to launch the "Changemaker Challenge," joining forces in an ambitious effort to transform top undergraduate and graduate institutions into centers for social entrepreneurship education. The Changemaker Challenge will consist of a three-week Winter Intensive, designed to serve as a hands-on consulting program for students looking to apply their skills and passion to a real-world challenge. Selected undergraduate and graduate teams from across the country will have the opportunity to create an implementable solution to a specific challenge currently facing Summer Advantage, providing them with an unprecedented opportunity to take their learning out of the classroom. Teams – including members from Ashoka's nine Changemaker Campuses – will compete nationwide to develop multi-disciplinary strategies to help Summer Advantage reach its goal of providing all children access to quality summer learning opportunities. Winners will be announced at the Ashoka Changemaker Campus Summit in February.

“We hope to use this partnership as a new model for campus-community collaboration, creating the ultimate bridge between theory and practice. Today’s students aren’t content to merely talk about “change”; they want to get their hands dirty—to understand the challenges that exist, and to be a part of their solution. The Changemaker Challenge will provide them with just that: giving students from across the country the opportunity to learn from current leaders who are transforming the social sector, and to grow as leaders themselves,” says Marina Kim, the Director of AshokaU.

Summer Advantage USA will be welcoming applications for its Winter Intensive November 9 through 30 and for its Spring Fellowship from December 1 through January 20. For more information, please visit www.summeradvantage.org or email hire@summeradvantage.org.

About Summer Advantage USA

Summer Advantage USA is a national non-profit organization that provides children grades K-8 with research-based summer learning programs focused on producing academic gains. Summer Advantage offers programs encompassing literacy, mathematics and extracurricular enrichment. This holistic approach to summer learning helps Summer Advantage USA scholars develop as citizens and leaders, in addition to achieving mastery of core academic subjects. Summer Advantage USA was launched in January 2009 with support from the Indiana Department of Education and The Mind Trust. For more information, please visit www.summeradvantage.org, email info@summeradvantage.org or call 866-207-3169.

About Ashoka

Founded in 1980, Ashoka is the world’s working community of more than 2,000 leading social entrepreneurs. It champions the most important new social change ideas and supports the entrepreneurs behind them by helping them get started, grow, succeed, and collaborate. As Ashoka expands its capability to integrate and connect entrepreneurs around the world, it builds an entrepreneurial infrastructure that is supporting the fast-growing needs of the citizen sector. Ashoka’s vision is to create change today, for an Everyone A Changemaker™ society to become the reality of tomorrow. For more information, visit www.ashoka.org.

About Ashoka U & the Changemaker Campus Initiative

Ashoka U is working to develop new models for higher education, envisioning a day when universities everywhere serve as an enabling environment in which every individual has access to the resources, learning opportunities, role models, and peer community needed to actualize their full potential as changemakers. Through the Changemaker Campus partnership, AshokaU works with teams of entrepreneurial students, faculty, and staff from across campus to transform select universities into hubs for social innovation. Now in its second year, the Changemaker Campus Consortium includes Babson College, College of the Atlantic, Cornell, George Mason, Johns Hopkins, The New School, Tulane, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of Maryland—all chosen specifically on their ability and readiness effect cross-campus change. For additional information, please visit www.ashoka.org/changemakercampus, or contact Erin Krampetz at ekrampetz@ashoka.org.