

Cornell University

Cornell Health

Skorton Center for Health  
Initiatives

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**Mathew Kleiner “Create Change: Health Leadership Award”  
2024 Awardee: Trisha Bhujle ’26**

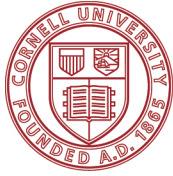
Cornell Health is pleased to announce Trisha Bhujle ’26 as the 2024 recipient of the “Create Change: Health Leadership Award.” Trisha was honored with this award for her creative campus leadership addressing climate change and eco-anxiety. The “Create Change” award was established to honor and carry forward the legacy of Mathew A. Kleiner, ’93. It is awarded to Cornell University students who demonstrate the courage and commitment to create change to enhance the health and well-being of the Cornell community, as Matt Kleiner did as a student leader at Cornell.

Trisha was nominated for this award by Dr. Laura Santacrose and Emily Dunuwila, in Cornell Health’s Skorton Center for Health Initiatives for her significant support of student and campus health and well-being through a variety of initiatives centered on improving the student experience related to climate change, planetary health, and eco-anxiety.

Trisha first approached the Skorton Center at the start of her sophomore year, interested in learning more about student resources and programming related to eco-anxiety. This initial connection then led to Trisha’s involvement in the development of a new dedicated webpage on the Cornell Health website providing information and resources about how to recognize and manage eco-anxiety, as well as opportunities to get involved in collective action. Trisha also organized a climate change-focused discussion series in collaboration with Cornell Botanic Gardens. These small-group discussion circles allow students, staff, and faculty to discuss through a focus on storytelling the realities of climate change and its impact on physical and mental health and well-being.

Additionally, Trisha has been instrumental in the revitalization of and leadership for the Nature Rx at Cornell registered student organization. This organization is dedicated to promoting the health benefits associated with spending time in nature. Trisha has spent this year working collaboratively with the other student leaders of the club to host interactive events in nature to reduce students’ stress and anxiety and improve both their cognitive ability and relationship with the natural environment. Events included hosting a “Weird Walk” where students were invited to participate in an outdoor walk to the Cornell Arboretum with a focus on looking for unique things in nature as an opportunity for students to destress before finals. Trisha has also served as a student representative to Cornell University’s Nature Rx Steering Committee.

Trisha spent significant time outside of the classroom applying what she is learning as an Environment and Sustainability major in service of promoting positive relationships between students and the surrounding campus environment as well as recognizing and working to



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address the growing rates of eco-anxiety that students report as they continue to learn more about the realities of climate change.

It is in this spirit of inspiration, leadership and positive community impact that we award Trisha Bhujle '26 with the Mathew A. Kleiner '93 Create Change Award.

Emily Dunuwila, MEd, LMT  
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Laura Santacrose, DrPH, MPH  
Associate Director, Skorton Center for Health Initiatives, Cornell Health

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