



A Multicultural Dreamer
Taynara Goncalves
Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative
Brazil/Massachusetts

Taynara Goncalves has always dreamed of being a doctor – ever since she was a very young girl living in a little village in Brazil. It was hard to earn a living there, so when she was three years old, her family moved to Martha’s Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts, because her father thought he could find work there and create a better life for his family. It wasn’t always easy for Taynara—some of the local people resented new immigrants and feared that their presence might limit their own economic opportunities. But others offered support. Learning about the Martha’s Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative was a turning point for Taynara. There she found friends, mentors, and guidance toward her unwavering goal. Today she works as a medical assistant in the Island Health Care Center, and is preparing to fulfill her dream by applying to medical school and becoming a doctor.

Values: Persistence Determination Generosity Resilience Compassion

Lessons Learned

- Cultural diversity enriches a community. Instead of fearing those we don’t know, we should make an effort to get to know them and embrace what they have to offer.
- Dreams are built on hard work, persistence, and resilience. Every day ask yourself: What am I working toward today?
- Challenges are opportunities to learn and grow. When you face a challenge, ask yourself: What can I learn from this? How will this help me grow?

Language Arts

- What is multiculturalism? Create a presentation in which you explain the concept, and the benefits of being multicultural, not only to the economy and to society, but also to a person’s brain. Finish your presentation with a reflection on how we can use multiculturalism as a tool to create a more sustainable world.
- One of the shocks Taynara suffered when she went back to her village in Brazil for a visit was to see not only the poverty, but the ravages climate change was wreaking in the community. Write a research paper on the types of climate found in Brazil, and how climate change has affected them. Don’t forget to look into how these environmental changes have affected the economy, the people living in the region, and what can be done to mitigate some of the damage.
- Taynara went from a warm, sometimes dry climate to Martha’s Vineyard, which has extreme winters and very warm summers. Despite these geographical differences, both areas are facing threats because of climate

change. Write a compare and contrast essay about Martha's Vineyard and Mantenópolis, Brazil, where Taynara was born: How has climate change affected each of these places? What challenges are the people who live there facing? What is being done to mitigate the damage? What else can be done?

- Write an essay about the effects that being multicultural has on brain development and brain activity. Use the information from your paper to create a short oral presentation summarizing your findings.

STEM Activities

- Multicultural youth have been at the forefront of the development of greater opportunities in many different fields.
 - Research the percentage of individuals in the following professions who had multicultural backgrounds between 2000-2010; then research the figures from 2010-2020, and compare them.
 - Doctors:
 - Physician Assistants:
 - Sustainability Consulting:
 - Interpret the percentages and the underlying factors that may be influencing this disparity.
- Ever since she was a little girl, Taynara knew she wanted to become a medical professional. In this [activity](#), students will simulate a doctor's office, playing the roles of physician, nurse, patients, and timekeeper, with the objective of improving the waiting time for patients. Students will use engineering principles and engineering design approaches to suggest how the process could be improved by collecting, graphing, and analyzing data.
- It is no secret that climate change can have an impact on our health. Research and describe the impacts of changing climate conditions on human health, with an emphasis on the effects on vulnerable populations. Create a visual model of the various health implications arising from climate change. The activity can be found [here](#).
- Due to the origin and spread of Covid-19, there has been an increase in racism and xenophobia directed toward people of Asian descent. In March 2021 a new spike of the Covid-19 P.1 variant appeared, which has been largely traced back to Brazil. In this [activity](#), students will create and prioritize questions about Covid-19, and will evaluate scientific and/or technical information from multiple authoritative sources, assessing the evidence and the usefulness of each source for answering their questions. Because there have been documented cases of unfounded and harmful racially-driven responses to the outbreak, students will also discuss appropriate and inappropriate responses to this new development.

Sustainability Innovations

- Different fields of work are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The [University of Washington Sustainability](#) has created two new initiatives that connect health care academics and operations with sustainability opportunities and challenges. How can similar initiatives be used to assist other institutional programs?
- Should it be a requirement for physicians to lead environmental sustainability efforts? This 2017 [article](#) in the *AMA Journal of Ethics* addresses this issue and targets sustainable business models.
- In addition to the need for collaboration within the fields of medicine and sustainability, delivery of healthcare can be a major contributor to fossil fuels in the UK. This [article](#) discusses this issue and the ability to address environmental, social, and financial constraints. Should healthcare facilities be required to follow sustainability-focused policy and codes?

Sustainable Career Pathways

- **Doctor.** Being a doctor, and helping to heal the sick is an honorable path, especially when the doctor recognizes the value of preventive medicine and has a holistic awareness of how the environment plays a key role in one's health and well-being. This includes broader issues such as the adverse effects of air, water, and soil pollution as well as elements in an individual's immediate environment--diet, toxins in the home, and access to green space. Unfortunately, too few doctors have a clear understanding of the importance of environmental health. Are you interested in becoming a doctor? [Here's how to do it step-by-step](#). And [here](#)

[is an article](#) exploring how medical schools are starting to better incorporate the principles of sustainability and environmental health into their curricula.

- **Environmental Health Advocate.** If you're interested in health, but not in practicing medicine, another path is to become an advocate for [environmental health](#). There are many organizations working to reduce toxic exposure, defend and clean up toxified cities, improve nutrition, expand access to green spaces, and so on. Is this the field for you? [Here is an introduction](#) to the field of environmental health.
- **High School Guidance Counselor.** Taynara's dream was almost crushed before it began, due to some bad advice she was given by her high school guidance counselor. But good guidance counselors serve as mentors and guides for young people, and can play a pivotal role in shaping their ambitions and dreams—including a dream for a sustainable future. If you like mentoring young people, this may be the path for you. [Here is an introduction to becoming a school counselor](#).

Call to Action: Learn how multicultural youth are becoming leaders of a sustainable world: www.MVYLLI.org

[View State Standards](#)

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www.stonesoupleadership.org

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