

real stories

The lives, dramas and triumphs of women just like you

Meet the Next Hillary and Michelle and...

Every year, *Glamour's* Top 10 College Women Competition honors budding leaders in every field—Martha Stewart won back in 1961! But the 2009 crew blew us away. Let them inspire you to dream big and make it happen!
By Erin Zammett Ruddy



The Scientist

ALEXANDRA
KEENAN, 22,
UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA

Keenan, at the historic Ganges River in India, where she did field work



ALEXANDRA KEENAN

Her dream: To establish a nonprofit that creates critical health tests in impoverished countries.

How she's making it happen: In 2007 the biomedical engineering, international studies and biochemistry triple major helped develop, along with a team of students, a hand-operated water sanitizer. By removing contaminants it can help prevent diarrheal disease, which more than a million die from every year in developing countries. The design won a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency and was named one of "10 Everyday Technologies That Can Change the World" by *Discover*. Now Keenan's working on a vaccine for a tropical parasitic disease and plans to get an M.D./Ph.D. "What I love about science is that it has the potential to affect so many people you'll never meet," she says. **Motto:** "Live deliberately." **Her Dos & Don'ts:** "Don't be afraid to take a chance. Do have a plan B."



West sorting prom dresses for her charity

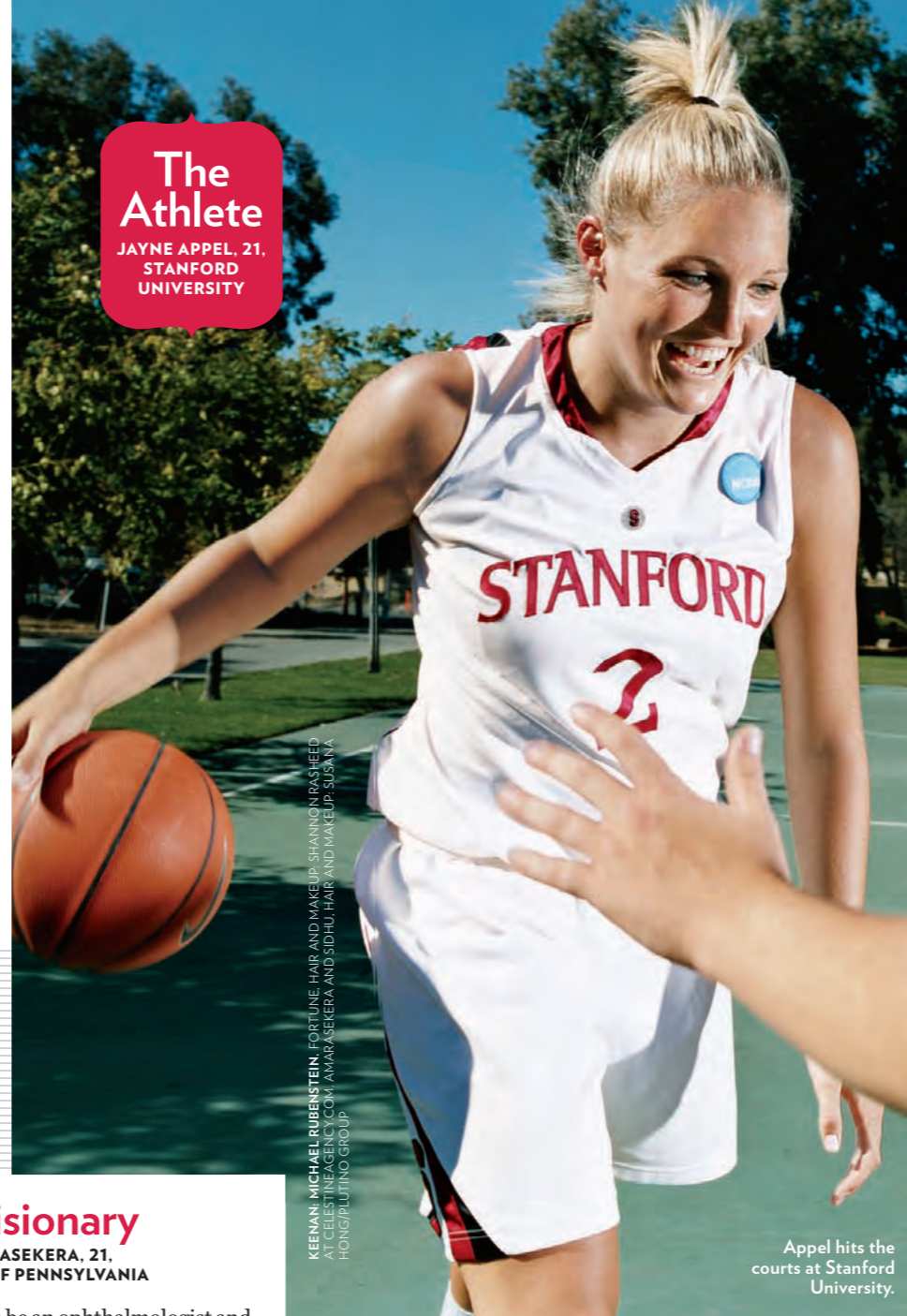
The Politician

MARISA WEST, 21, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Her dream: To be a U.S. senator.

How she's making it happen: West interned on Capitol Hill starting at age 16; last summer she moved to the East Wing of the White House, where she worked with First Lady Michelle Obama's team. "When you grow up near D.C., it's hard not to fall in love with politics," she says. At school she served as the director of a peer-counseling hotline for sexual assault survivors. She also runs Prom Dresses for New Orleans, which she started after Hurricane Katrina. It has given away some 5,000 free dresses and has expanded to include Texas students affected by Hurricane Ike.

Motto: "Be the change you believe in."



The Athlete

JAYNE APPEL, 21, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Her dream: To play for the WNBA.

How she's making it happen: As captain of the Stanford Cardinal team, Appel devotes about seven hours a day to basketball, and it shows.

An All-American, she led her team to the Final Four the past two seasons. The 6'4" center grew up in the San Francisco Bay area shooting hoops with her three brothers. "I was a tagalong sister and wanted to do whatever they were doing," she says. Off the court, Appel was inspired by a family member who suffers from mental illness to do advocacy work on the issue and volunteer for a support group. The psychology major plans to graduate early so she can prepare for the WNBA and expects to pursue a career in mental health advocacy.

Embarrassing moment: "Air-balling a free throw on national television."

Can't live without: "My flip-flops—I'm a California girl."

Appel hits the courts at Stanford University.

KEENAN: MICHAEL RUBENSTEIN; FORTUNE: HAIR AND MAKEUP: SHANNON RASHEED AT CELESTINE AGENCY; COM: AMARASEKERA AND SIDHU: HAIR AND MAKEUP: SUSANA HONG/PLUTINO GROUP

The Visionary

SOHANI AMARASEKERA, 21, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Her dream: To be an ophthalmologist and put an end to preventable blindness.

How she's making it happen: Volunteering at an eye clinic in India after her freshman year, Amarasekera helped diagnose a woman with cataracts. After surgery, the patient, who had been partially blind, grabbed her hand and cried tears of joy. "Then she whispered, 'Thank you,'" recalls Amarasekera, "and at that moment I knew this is what I wanted to do." In 2008 the sociology and biology double major founded the first vision clinic in Sri Lanka—her parents' homeland—to offer screening for diabetic eye disease (the country has 10 times the global prevalence of the disease). The clinic now sees 600 patients a month. Her next goals? A master's in global health, then medical school.

On her iPod: "Refuge," by John Legend.

Can't live without: "My hair straightener!"



Amarasekera at home in Toronto



Sidhu in front of Lake Ontario in Toronto, where she lives and goes to school

The Journalist

JASMEET SIDHU, 21, TRINITY COLLEGE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Her dream: To be an international journalist.

How she's making it happen: As a sophomore, Sidhu wrote to the *Toronto Star* suggesting ways for the paper to improve its coverage. She was promptly asked to join the Community Editorial Board—the youngest member ever—and soon started writing opinion columns for the *Star*, Canada's largest newspaper. Sidhu, whose family moved from Malaysia to Canada when she was a baby, has covered everything from HIV/AIDS in Africa to climate change. As the peace and conflict major says, "My mother used to deliver the *Star* when we first came to Canada. Now her daughter writes for the very same newspaper. Amazing, right?!" **How she unwinds:** Celebrity gossip blogs. **On her iPod:** Songs from *American Idol*—"I'm obsessed!" *Continued on next page* ➔



Fortune singing at The Pink Door in Seattle

The Vocalist

COURTNEY FORTUNE, 21, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Her dream: To be an international performing and recording artist.

How she's making it happen: The Bellingham, Washington, native started singing in jazz bars at 13. "I'd show up for school the next day smelling like hairspray and cigarette smoke." When she was a sophomore, a Grammy-nominated producer helped her record *Speak Love*, her debut album. Then she won USC's Brian Wilson Scholarship for songwriting. Fortune, who has performed in Tokyo and London, works with foster kids at Los Angeles' Peapod Music and Arts Academy, which is supported by the Black Eyed Peas. **Motto:** "We have the power to write our own stories." **Her Dos & Don'ts:** "Do say yes to karaoke. Don't forget your friends have camera phones."



The Advocate

LILY EAGLE
DORMAN COLBY,
22, YALE
UNIVERSITY

Dorman Colby at the Capitol, where she interned with Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn.)

Her dream: To reform foster care policy so more at-risk kids get to go to college.

How she's making it happen: Dorman Colby herself entered the California foster care system at age 12 after her parents were unable to care for her due to their drug abuse and mental illness; she clung to school as the only constant in her life. It paid off: She ultimately got a full scholarship to Yale. Then, after freshman year, she successfully lobbied to become a foster mother to her brother, who has autism, and took care of him while working full-time until he could be placed in a good home. "I've learned to never take no for an answer," she says. The economics major has worked with two U.S. senators on foster care reform and interned at the Child Welfare League of America. Law school is next. **How she unwinds:** "I watch *House* on Hulu." **Favorite inspirational quote:** "Speak your mind, even if your voice shakes."

Inspired by Our Winners?

Here's their best advice:

1
"Do not overestimate the competition, or underestimate yourself."
—Jasmeet Sidhu

2
"Read a newspaper every day—you'll be so much more on top of your game."
—Tish Scolnik

3
"It's easy to lend a hand to the ones closest to us. Try to reach your hand out just a little further."
—Lily Eagle Dorman Colby

The Inventor

TISH SCOLNIK, 21, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Her dream: To see disabled people in developing countries given the same opportunities as able-bodied people.

How she's making it happen: Working abroad in Tanzania, the mechanical engineering major was overwhelmed by how handicapped people lived. She once met a disabled student who had to crawl across campus because he didn't have a wheelchair. So she created a design for a three-wheel folding chair, complete with work space, storage, an umbrella—and a spot for an ad on back.

Back on campus, she helped found the Mobility Lab to get students involved (and won a 2009 Truman Scholarship). **Words to live by:** "Haba na haba hujaza kibaba," a Swahili proverb that can translate to 'little by little fills the pot.'" **Her Dos & Don'ts:** "Do smile at people you pass on the street. Don't order a salad when you really want a cheeseburger." *Continued on next page* ➡



Scolnik in Washington, D.C., where she interned with the World Bank this summer

The Doctor

ALEXANDRA ROSENBERG, 21, UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT

Rosenberg in West Point's most formal uniform



Her dream: To be an Army doctor and ultimately become the secretary of veterans affairs.

How she's making it happen: Before she even started at West Point, Rosenberg wanted to pursue medicine. When she interned at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii as a sophomore, her commitment was confirmed: "These soldiers had been badly injured in Iraq or Afghanistan but still wanted to remain on active duty," she says. "It was incredibly inspiring." Rosenberg, who's ranked number one academically in her class of more than 1,000, spent much of her junior year researching ways to reform and improve services for veterans, earning a 2009 Truman Scholarship. She hopes to spend her military days stationed in Hawaii "so I can spend my afternoons surfing!" **Can't live without:** Mascara. "I wore it through basic training, field training, you name it!" **On her iPod:** "Free," by Faith Hill.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Tina Charles, 20, University of Connecticut
The All-American basketball phenom led her undefeated team to the 2009 NCAA championship. A New Yorker, Charles is aiming for the WNBA.

Priya Sury, 21, Washington University in St. Louis
The Minnesota native parlayed her internship at the prestigious Mayo Clinic to develop a science outreach program that has helped underprivileged students get into college.

The Mentor

PAMELA NWAOKO, 21, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Her dream: To create state-mandated mentorship programs for at-risk youth.

How she's making it happen: Nwaoko grew up in Irvington, New Jersey, surrounded by poverty, crime and drugs. In junior high she joined SEEDS, an intensive tutoring/mentoring program; it got her into a prestigious New England boarding school. As a sophomore in college, she codirected Girl Talk, a mentoring initiative for D.C. teens, and in 2008 was named a Goldman Sachs Global Leader. Today she's still involved with SEEDS: "I tell girls, 'I'm gonna pick you up just like other people picked me up.'" Nwaoko, who hopes to attend law school next year, says, "I don't want to forget where I came from." **How she unwinds:** Warm brownies with vanilla ice cream. **Motto:** "If you can imagine better, you can do better."



Nwaoko, mentoring girls through New Jersey's SEEDS program

Would You Like to Enter? Apply for *Glamour's* 2010 Top 10 College Women competition at glamour.com/contest (see page 317 for details). Go for it!