

# SOMERSET START-UPS

## EmBracelets Serve Good Causes

In this new feature we will highlight our young Somerset residents who have been spending their pandemic days in community-spirited ways. This first column features Sidwell Friends senior Olivia Castel.



**By Olivia Castel,**  
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In 2020, I launched EmBracelets ([www.embracelets.org](http://www.embracelets.org)), an organization that aims to simultaneously raise money and awareness for organizations focused

on community empowerment. We identify a “focus organization” for which we raise money during a specified period of time. We then design and sell beaded bracelets whose messages align with the mission of the focus organization. EmBracelets supports organizations that specifically address racial, gender, and educational inequalities. When you purchase a bracelet, 75% of the proceeds are donated to the focus organization, and 25% of the proceeds are used for supplies and labor costs.

I was inspired to start EmBracelets in April 2020 when I came across rainbow seed-bead bracelets being sold for over \$50.00! I thought, “I could make these myself,” and proceeded to order an \$11.00 kit. At the time, I was attending the many Black Lives Matter protests in Washington, DC, so I made Black Lives Matter bracelets for my friends and me to wear. At one of the protests, I learned about Campaign Zero, an organization aiming to end police brutality in the United States. I admired the direct approach Campaign Zero took toward ending police brutality and eagerly wanted to get involved. My entrepreneurial instincts took over, and I began selling the

Black Lives Matter bracelets to raise money for Campaign Zero. This idea eventually evolved into a larger mission: to embrace our communities by promoting equality. I hope that the donations will not only facilitate achieving this mission, but the awareness that the bracelets bring will, as well.

I started selling the bracelets on the community listserv; by July 2020, I designed and launched our website. So far, we have successfully raised \$1,000 for Campaign Zero and \$1,110 for Fair Fight, a Georgia-based organization that aims to end the disenfranchisement of U.S. citizens. We have expanded our team and recruited two volunteers, Sidwell Friends students Baani Singh and Kasey Wood, who assist with bracelet production. By April 1st, we hope to

announce our upcoming focus organization, which will be centered around improving educational access for girls in resource-limited countries. Additionally, we are recruiting more volunteers to help with customer relations, product and website design, newsletters, and bracelet-making. If you would like to join our team, please email me at [oliviacastel7@gmail.com](mailto:oliviacastel7@gmail.com). And, if you are interested in supporting EmBracelets, please subscribe to our website at [www.embracelets.org](http://www.embracelets.org); follow us on Instagram [@embracelets\\_org](https://www.instagram.com/embracelets_org); place an order to support our focus organization; or spread the word!

