



THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS
HONORING OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE BY YOUNG AMERICANS

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**IDAHO'S TOP TWO YOUTH VOLUNTEERS SELECTED
IN 15th ANNUAL NATIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM**

**Boise and Nampa students earn \$1,000 awards,
engraved medallions and trip to nation's capital**

Honors also bestowed on youth volunteers in Hayden and Cascade

BOISE, Idaho – Graham Ashby, 15, of Boise and Kylie Gish, 12, of Nampa today were named Idaho's top two youth volunteers for 2010 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The awards program, now in its 15th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Graham was nominated by Bishop Kelly High School in Boise, and Kylie was nominated by Lone Star Middle School in Nampa. As State Honorees, each will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where they will join the top two honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events. Ten of them will be named America's top youth volunteers for 2010 at that time.

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Graham, a freshman at Bishop Kelly High School, launched a book-collection campaign to benefit schools on the Caribbean island of Carriacou, and incorporated a pen pal program to connect island children who receive books with the American students who donate them. While accompanying her parents on a medical mission to Carriacou, part of the nation of Grenada, Graham visited a local school and discovered it had neither a library nor books for pleasure reading. "I know that reading not only makes you a well-rounded person, but it opens up so many doors in your life," said Graham. "It was shocking to me that these children did not have that opportunity."

Upon returning home, Graham decided to work with her sister to begin collecting books for the school she had visited. Graham contacted her elementary school and appealed for new and gently used books from the student body, sent e-mails and letters to friends and classmates, and built a website (www.friendsthroughbooks.com) to attract donations. More than 1,000 books arrived during the first few months, along with monetary donations that Graham used to purchase new books. She placed a sticker in each book with the name and address of the donor, in hopes that pen pal relationships would develop between the donors and the recipients. Graham personally delivered the first collection of books last August, and is now working to expand her campaign to other elementary schools on Carriacou. "The opportunity to visit exotic places, learn interesting facts and enter a world of fantasy just by turning the pages of a book is a privilege no child should be deprived of," she said.

Kylie, a seventh-grader at Lone Star Middle School, is raising and training a puppy to become an assistance dog for a disabled person. Kylie loves to help others by doing things like raking leaves, babysitting, and grading papers for elementary school teachers. But "I wanted to do something in my life that would make a difference in this world for years to come," she said. So when she heard her family talking one day about a nonprofit organization called Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), she jumped at the chance to get involved.

After applying online for a puppy, participating in a telephone interview, and having a CCI representative inspect her home, Kylie received an 8-week-old puppy named Windy. She has to get up early every morning to feed the dog, spend at least an hour a day teaching her good behavior and basic commands, and take her on outings to "socialize" her. To pay for Windy's food and medical treatments, Kylie saves money from her allowance and odd jobs, and raises additional funds by selling hats that she makes. "My mom warned me that it would be a lot of work," said Kylie, "but that seeing the joy it would bring to others at the end would be totally worth it."

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In addition, the program judges recognized two other Idaho students as Distinguished Finalists for their impressive community service activities. Each will receive an engraved bronze medallion:

Austin Beals, 17, of Hayden, a senior at Coeur d'Alene High School in Coeur d'Alene, is an active volunteer who has worked on many different service projects. He has mentored freshmen at his school, assisted the homeless, worked with disabled youth, helped run the children's ministry at his church, volunteered at a camp for foster children, and served with Idaho Drug Free Youth. Austin also started a club at his school that provides positive social opportunities for every student.

Betsy Hinze, 18, of Cascade, a senior at Cascade High School, has spent the past four summers volunteering as a "cabin leader" at a weeklong science-based summer camp. In addition to watching over the young teenage girls in her cabin to make sure they enjoy their experience and behave appropriately, Betsy helps teach labs, leads discussions, and plans activities such as campfire programs.

"People as caring and committed as these young students are critical to the future of our neighborhoods, our cities and our nation," said John R. Strangfeld, chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial. "By recognizing these honorees, we hope to encourage other young people – our future leaders – and all Americans to think more about the value and importance of volunteering in their communities."

"The young people recognized by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards demonstrate an enormous capacity for giving and reaching out to those in need," said Gerald N. Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. "NASSP is proud to honor these student leaders because they are wonderful examples of the high caliber of young people in our nation's schools today."

All public and private middle level and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and affiliates of HandsOn Network, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award this past November. Nearly 5,000 Local Honorees were then reviewed by an independent judging panel, which selected State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists based on criteria such as personal initiative, creativity, effort, impact and personal growth.

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While in Washington, D.C., the 102 State Honorees will tour the capital's landmarks, attend a gala awards ceremony at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, and visit their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill. In addition, 10 of them – five middle level and five high school students – will be named National Honorees on May 3 by a prestigious national selection committee. These honorees will receive additional \$5,000 awards, gold medallions, crystal trophies, and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit, charitable organizations of their choice.

Serving on the national selection committee will be Strangfeld of Prudential; Steven Pophal, president of NASSP; Michelle Nunn, president and CEO of the Points of Light Institute & Hands On Network; Marguerite Kondracke, president and CEO of the America's Promise Alliance; Donald T. Floyd Jr., president and CEO of National 4-H Council; Pamela Farr, the American Red Cross' national chair of volunteers; Elson Nash, associate director for project management at the Corporation for National and Community Service; Michael Cohen, president and CEO of Achieve, Inc.; and two 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community National Honorees: Shardy Camargo of Orlando, Fla., and Colin Leslie of Rye, N.Y.

In addition to granting its own awards, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program will distribute President's Volunteer Service Awards to more than 2,800 of its Local Honorees this year on behalf of President Obama. The President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their communities and their country.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards represent the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service. Since the program began in 1995, more than 90,000 young volunteers nationwide have been honored at the local, state or national level. Many prominent public figures have assisted in saluting these honorees over the years, including President Jimmy Carter, Barbara Bush, Magic Johnson, John Glenn, Madeleine Albright, Rudy Giuliani, Whoopi Goldberg, Colin Powell, Peyton Manning, Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson and Laura Bush. The program also is conducted by Prudential subsidiaries in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Ireland.

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For information on all of this year's Prudential Spirit of Community State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists, visit spirit.prudential.com.

In existence since 1916, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the preeminent organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. NASSP's mission is to promote excellence in school leadership. The National Honor Society®, National Junior Honor Society®, National Elementary Honor Society™, and National Association of Student Councils® are all NASSP programs. For more information about NASSP, located in Reston, Va., visit www.principals.org or call 703-860-0200.

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Editors: Graphics depicting the award program's logo and medallions may be downloaded from spirit.prudential.com.