

The official newspaper of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, sponsored by Prudential Financial and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Copyright 2007 Prudential Financial. All rights reserved.

Kids Show They Care about U.S. Servicemen and Women

While both James Bailey of Leavenworth, Kan. and Alexandra McGregor of Waterford, Mich. wanted U.S. servicemen and women to know that people back home care about their sacrifices, they went about it in very different ways.

James organized a community-wide drive to collect donations for "care packages" that were sent overseas to the troops. Alexandra worked hard to

following the 9/11 tragedy," says James, explaining why he recruited members of his 4-H club to collect personal products, games and magazines, snacks and more for over 700 care packages that were shipped to soldiers in Iraq.

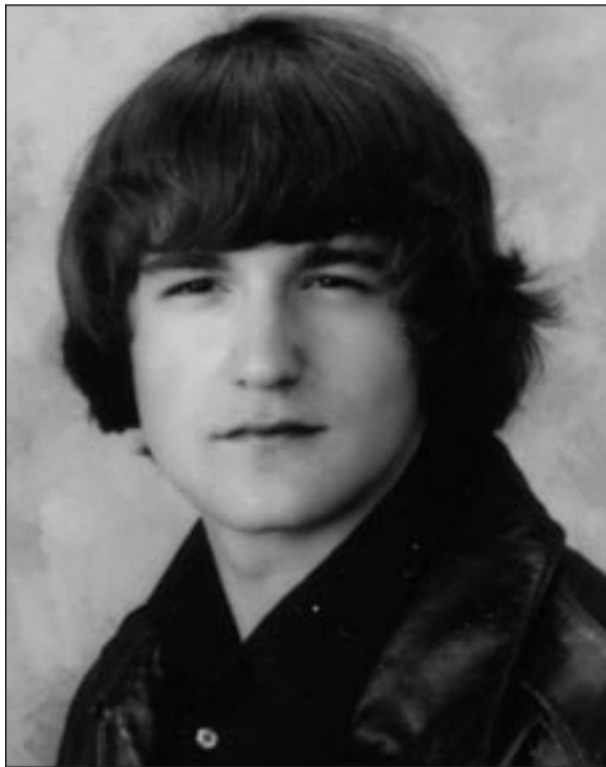
nity Awards program, which annually honors outstanding youth volunteers nationwide.

Both James and Alexandra made a difference not only in their own communities but around the world.

Thanks to Alexandra, her township, county, state and the U.S. Congress all passed resolutions designating March 26, 2006 as recognition day for all active-duty U.S. troops. People in towns all over the U.S. observed five minutes of silence at 6:00 pm on that day.

James and his friends made a direct impact on 754 U.S. soldiers who received their care packages and handmade pillow cases.

James and Alexandra also made a lasting impression on themselves. Says James: "I learned that, although a person can accomplish quite a bit on his own, much more can be done when that person takes his idea and branches it out through the community."



James Bailey

convince federal, state and local officials to declare a special day of recognition honoring U.S. soldiers serving around the world.

But while they took different approaches, James and Alexandra were both motivated by personal experiences.

"I was filled with a sense of patriotism



Alexandra McGregor

Alexandra was moved by the memory of her late grandfather, who fought in World War II, which is why she worked to get her grandfather's birthday, March 26, declared as "Support Our Troops Day" in 2006. "They (soldiers) do so much for our country," says Alexandra, explaining why she wrote to almost every political figure in Michigan, plus a lot in Washington, in her successful effort.

Both James and Alexandra were recently recognized as State Honorees by the Prudential Spirit of Commu-

nity Awards program, which annually honors outstanding youth volunteers nationwide.

What Do Eating Right, Exercising and Volunteering Have in Common?

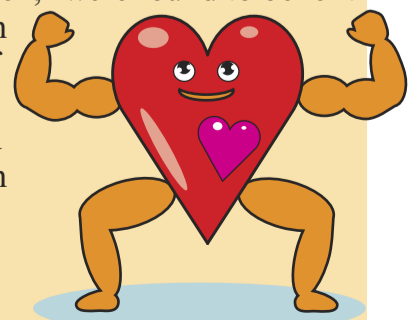
Everyone knows that volunteering is good for one's community.

But did you know that, just like eating right and exercising, volunteering can actually be good for your personal health?

According to a recent report from the Corporation for National and Community Service, people who help others help themselves by promoting good health.

People who volunteer reportedly have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression in later life than people who did not volunteer.

Volunteers who put in about 100 hours per year, which is about two hours a week, were found to benefit the most in terms of improved health and outlook on life.



Quiz

Is volunteering growing faster among older teenagers (16-19) or younger teenagers (13-15)? (Answer and more questions are on the last page)

When the Theater is too Far Away ...



Andrew Leibel

What would you do if you loved the theater but lived in a small rural town where the nearest community theater was 30 miles away?

What Andrew Leibel of Superior, Neb. did was start his own theater.

Andrew not only founded a theater in his community but also took on the responsibility of operating it. Andrew produced four plays over an 18-month period. He used his summer job earnings to build a set, purchase costumes, secure legal rights and more. He also lined up volunteers to help out.

For his efforts, Andrew was named a State Honoree this year by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

Andrew's community theater has a bright future. Says Andrew: "With our active group leaders, our strong base of support, and the audience members who keep coming back for more, all signs suggest that the theater is here to stay."

Helpers Around the World

“I practically cried when I heard the stories,” says Anne Jaffe of Mesa, Ariz., explaining how she got started interviewing and photographing young Sudanese refugees at the refugee center where she volunteers.

Anne mounts the photographs and accompanying stories on a “story board wall” at the center. The wall



Anne Jaffe

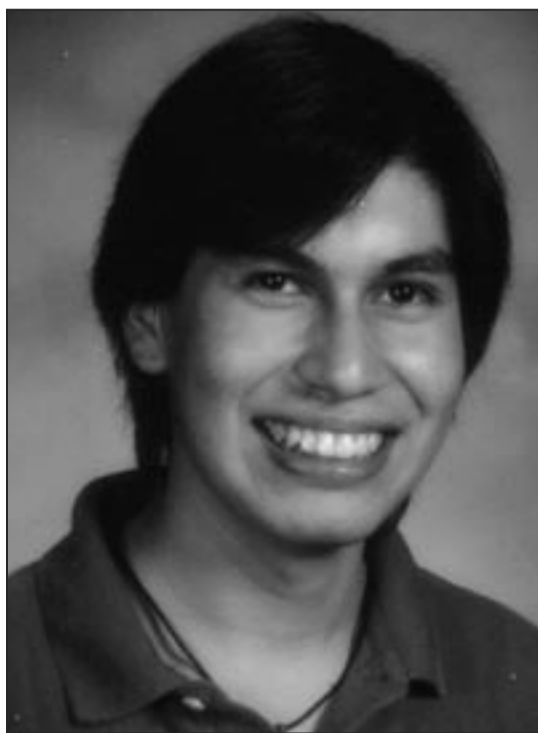
helps educate visitors about the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. It also has become a source of pride and inspiration to the refugees.

Anne says she has been deeply moved by the refugees’ stories, which she says are about “seeing the militia burn their villages, steal their livestock, and try to kill or kidnap the villagers, especially the young boys.”

“Working with children with diabetes has been the most rewarding experience I could possibly have had,” says Paul Ervin of Washington, DC, who works with an international organization very active in Ecuador.

Paul is an Inca Indian and Ecuador is old Inca territory, which Paul says made his choice of volunteer project a “perfect match.”

Paul travels to Ecuador in the summer and participates



Paul Ervin

in educational workshops to develop youth leaders. While there, he helps run a camp for diabetic children, checking on their insulin and blood sugar levels and performing other important tasks.

“Some of the children were living alone. Kids my age were taking the place of their parents because their parents had died of AIDS. I knew

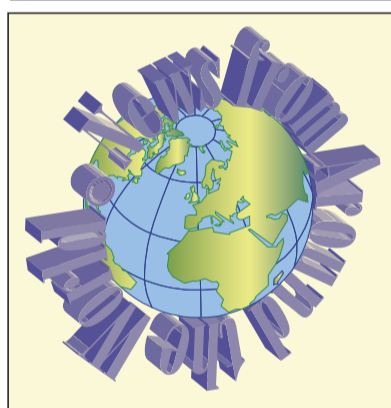
I needed to do something,” recalls Kendall Ciesemier of Wheaton, Ill.

What Kendall did after seeing all this on an Oprah Winfrey TV special about the African AIDS epidemic was to form a nonprofit organization that raised \$50,000 in three years to benefit AIDS orphans in Africa.

Kendall, who speaks to community groups and young children about this crisis, says, “I want people to see how small a contribution it takes to make a difference.”



Kendall Ciesemier



The Summer Olympics are in China next year and the Chinese government wants as many volunteers as it can get. According to news reports, over 500,000

programs they can work in, including pre-Olympics activities already underway.

❖ A handful of volunteers at a community college in Kansas have made a lot of people very happy. These volunteers work for free helping prepare individuals’ tax returns. Since the program began four years ago, the college students reportedly have helped taxpayers receive more than \$2.6 million in refunds.

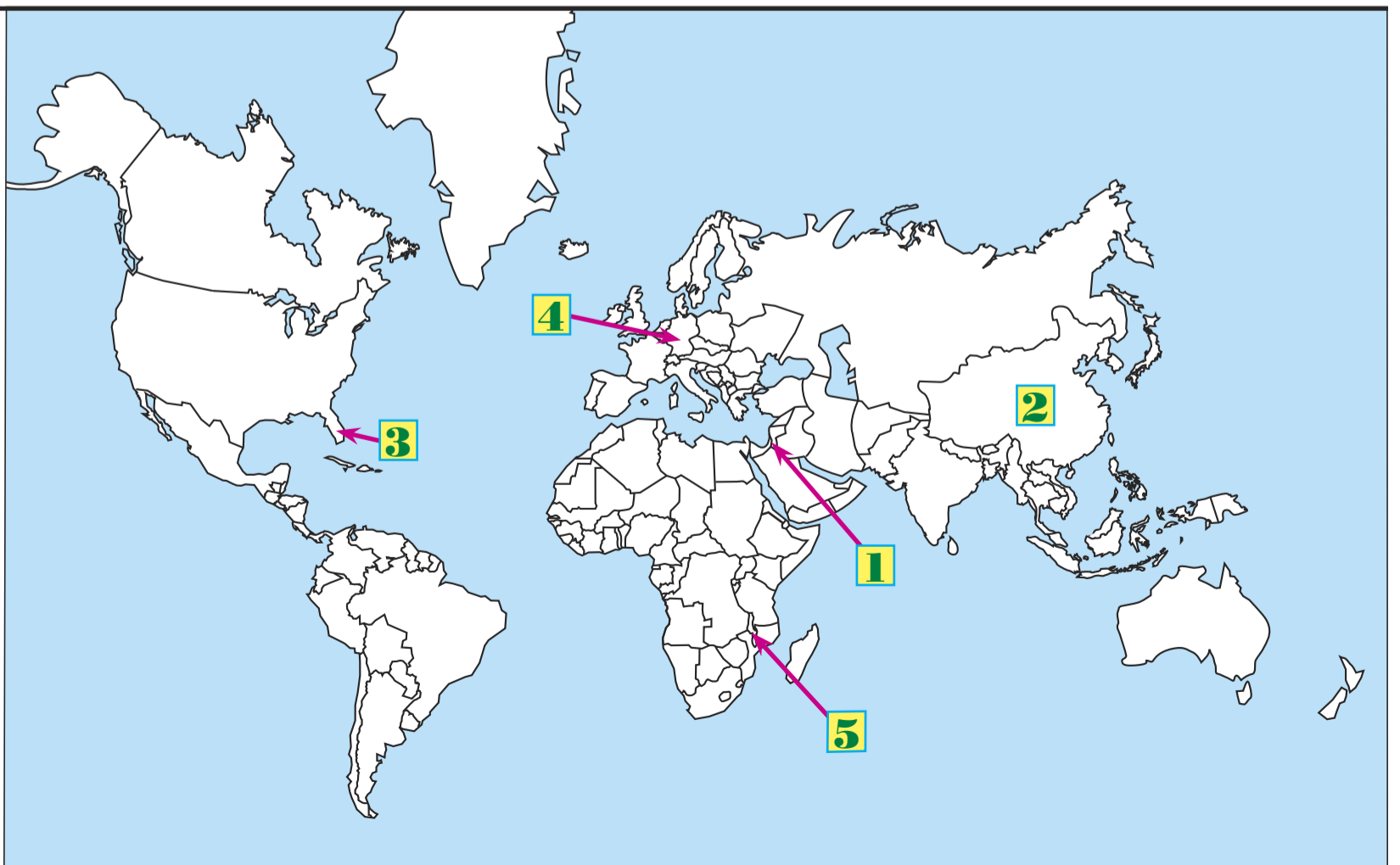
❖ In one Wisconsin community, some volunteers reportedly have their own nicknames. There’s Leon, known as the “sweet

corn” man, who raises corn for everyone in his neighborhood. Then there is Donna, who is known as the “reading Grandma” because of her work at a local school.

❖ How many students does it take to beautify a school’s grounds? In one Washington community, it used to take 13. But the program has gotten so popular that this year 60 students worked in teams one Monday each month to pull weeds, plant flowers and pick up trash.

have volunteered so far, more than half from the Beijing area. Volunteers have six different

In Florida more than 350,000 volunteers just picked up about 7 million pounds of trash from 34,000 miles of coastline. In Malawi, there’s a new youth club whose members volunteer to educate others on AIDS. As reported in the “News” section, over 500,000 will be volunteers at the 2008 Olympics in China. Nearly two dozen young Germans reportedly are doing a year’s worth of volunteer work in Israel in part to make amends for the Holocaust. Can you find each of these places (Florida, Malawi, China, Germany, and Israel) on the numbered map? (Answers are on the last page)



The 'Just Yell Fire' Approach To Self Defense

When Dallas Jessup of Vancouver, Wash. watched a TV news story about a girl who was abducted and later killed, she got an idea.



Dallas Jessup

Dallas, who has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, decided to make a film to teach teenage girls how to fight back against an attacker.

When she did some research, Dallas was surprised and disappointed to learn there was hardly

any information for young girls on how to fight off attackers. So with the help of her coach, she put together a series of simple moves that can help even a 100-pound girl get away from a 250-pound bully.

"We came up with eye gouges, biting, ear pulling, and groin slapping," among other maneuvers, Dallas says. She and a friend then wrote a script and, with the help of a professional film crew and actors, made a 45-minute film called "Just Yell Fire."

Less than three weeks after the film was available for download on the Internet, more than 14,000 people had taken advantage of the opportunity. Says Dallas: "The ultimate impact I hope for is that predators will be put out of business, and women all over

the world can go anywhere without being worried that someone more powerful will hurt them."

For her efforts, Dallas was recognized this year as a Prudential Spirit of Community State Honoree. ■

Teen Demonstrates Democracy in Action

Next February candidates wishing to be their party's nominee for President of the United States in November 2008 will square off in

organizing youth-run debates among candidates for state and city offices.

As chair of Manchester's Youth

Advisory Council, Ashley set up the debates. This required her first to research what a state senator and a member of the executive council actually do. Then she had to persuade some reluctant candidates that it would be worth their time to participate in something run by teens. She also had to prep members of the youth council in how to moderate a debate, plus prepare press releases.

When it was over, Ashley found that she had learned something important, namely, that "Being involved in your community makes you aware of your surroundings and lets you see life from a different perspective."

Ashley was recognized as one of this year's State Honorees by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. ■



Ashley Pratte

a very important primary vote in New Hampshire.

For one New Hampshire teen, it will all have a familiar ring. In October 2006 Ashley Pratte of Manchester played the leading role

Books, Books and More Books Makes for a Great Project

Sometimes the very best volunteer projects are the ones literally at your fingertips.

That was the case for Yaneisha



Yaneisha Bourroughs

sha Bourroughs of the Bronx, NY, who this year was recognized as a State Honoree by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program for her efforts to collect nearly 2,000 books to give to disadvantaged and hospitalized children.

Because Yaneisha's mother works in a school, the book project was a natural. When Yaneisha cleaned her room and discovered how many books she

no longer needed, well, it didn't take long for her to figure out what she wanted to do with them.

Says Yaneisha: "I figured that there probably were many other people who had books that they didn't need and wouldn't mind donating."

Yaneisha made and handed out flyers. She made appointments to go around her neighborhood and pick up books from friends and neighbors. She joined with a community organization that helped her distribute the books. Yaneisha gave out some of them to children in a hospital while dressed as a clown.



Yaneisha delivering books to a local hospital

Yaneisha didn't just give things away. She says she also got something back, namely, the joy that comes from volunteering. ■

Indiana Teen Works to Bridge the Cultural Gap

It was something one of his teachers said that got Evan Appleman of Indianapolis, Ind. launched on his volunteer project.

Remembers Evan: "He said that the greatest problem people have is that they don't understand each other, not out of spite, but often out of ignorance."

Evan says he decided that "it would be a great idea to inform people of the growing Hispanic community," and so with a couple of friends Evan produced a series of bilingual TV programs for a local cable TV channel.

Evan and his friends did all the work themselves. They wrote the script, filmed and edited each program, and persuaded the local TV outlet to put his series on the air.

For his efforts, Evan was recognized as a State Honoree by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. He has also gotten a lot of positive feedback from



Evan Appleman

his own community. "Those who have seen (the series) said that they thoroughly enjoyed it and that they had no idea so much was going on in the community." ■

In Their Own Words

(In each issue we let kids speak for themselves on why they volunteer and why they chose the projects they did. Each of these kids is a 2007 Prudential Spirit of Community State Honoree.)

“Recognizing that I was blessed with dance, academic and musical abilities, I felt the need to



Katherine Amigo

help those who did not have the same opportunities due to physical, mental or intellectual challenges,” says Katherine Amigo of West Windsor, NJ, explaining why she formed a performance band to raise money for worthy causes,

Computer Corner

(Another in our series of stories about Web sites developed by winners of The Prudential Spirit of Community Award.)

<http://www.hivesforlives.com>

Not long after their grandfather died of throat cancer, sisters Molly and Carolyn Houlahan of Devon, Pa. launched a Web site to help sell the honey that their grandparents collected through their bee-keeping hobby, and then donate the proceeds to a cancer-fighting organization.

Thus was born “hives for honey,” which has been a key factor in the girls raising more than \$17,000 for the American Cancer Society.

The girls harvest the honey at the end of summer, and then spin, filter, bottle and label it by hand. They also make lip balm and candles from beeswax.

In addition to taking orders on their Web site, the girls sell their honey at fairs, markets, hospital gift shops, and food stores.

The kids also recruit “bee helpers” who volunteer to speak at schools and hospitals and to meet with suppliers and other business people. ■



Molly Houlahan



Carolyn Houlahan

Map Answers

1. Israel
2. China
3. Florida
4. Germany
5. Malawi

including encouraging other kids to volunteer.

Katherine says she woke up to the idea of helping others in this way when she attended the opening ceremonies of New Jersey’s Special Olympics. The experience “changed my life,” she says, and now Katherine is out to change the lives of others for the better.

“My desire to volunteer was inspired by my parents who, as refugees from Vietnam, appreciated greatly the goodness of this country and have since tried to give back to the community in many ways,” says David Trinh of Maineville, Ohio.



David Trinh

David has given back through a student volunteer organization he co-founded called the Bethany Group. Its 140 or so members perform music recitals for the elderly. They also support a women’s homeless

shelter, organize canned food drives, write letters to U.S. troops and more.

Says David: “Volunteering is recognizing how lucky we are” and showing it to others.

“It is up to us as young people to support conservation efforts so that these ancient reptiles can continue to swim the world,” says Alexander Srodes of Placida, Fla., explaining why he has spent the last five years working to save endangered sea turtles.

“When I learned that (sea turtles) were rapidly approaching extinction, I knew I had to notify my peers that



Alexander Srodes

this problem existed,” says David, whose activities have included creating a “Turtle Talk” education program that he gives at schools and libraries. In five years, Alexander has given his talk to thousands of people. ■

Quiz Continued from Page One

Quiz Answer: Volunteering is growing faster among older teenagers.

1. Which of these groups has the WORST record for volunteering:
 - a. Teenagers 16-19
 - b. Adults over 65
 - c. Young Adults 25-34
 - d. Mid-life Adults 45-64
2. How many million American adults volunteered in their communities in 2005:
 - a. 13 million
 - b. 37 million
 - c. 65 million
 - d. 179 million
3. In 1989 about 14% of teenagers volunteered. In 2005 the percentage was:
 - a. 12
 - b. 14
 - c. 25
 - d. 38
4. Which age group is most likely to spend 100 or more hours per year volunteering:
 - a. Teenagers 16-19
 - b. Adults Over 65
 - c. Adults 45-54
 - d. None of the Above
5. According to a British study, the biggest reason why kids don’t volunteer is:
 - a. They don’t know how to get started
 - b. They don’t think they have anything to offer
 - c. They don’t want to be bothered
 - d. They want to be paid
6. Over the last 12 years, how many young Americans have participated in the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. More than:
 - a. 50,000
 - b. 100,000
 - c. 150,000
 - d. 200,000

Answers: 1. c; 2. c; 3. c; 4. b; 5. a; 6. d

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards constitute the nation’s largest youth recognition program based exclusively on volunteer community service. Since its inception in 1995, the program has honored more than 75,000 middle and high school students at the local, state and national level. Applications are available each fall through schools, Girl Scout councils, county 4-H programs, Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and Volunteer Centers affiliated with the Points of Light Foundation. For more information, visit www.prudential.com/spirit or www.principals.org/prudential, or call 1-877-525-8491.

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