

# America's Top 10 Youth Volunteers Named

(NAPSA)—If you worry about young people these days, take heart: lots of them are already changing the world for the better.

Every year, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards honors middle and high school students whose service has made a positive difference in communities across America and around the world. The program has recognized nearly 100,000 young heroes since its start 16 years ago.

This year's top 10 honorees included:

- A high school senior from Iowa who co-founded a cheerleading squad that includes students with disabilities, then formed a nonprofit that helps teens nationwide start similar squads at their schools.

- An 18-year-old Utah student who coordinated building a day care and community center in Guatemala to give impoverished single mothers a safe place to leave their children while they work.

- A 13-year-old Rhode Island girl who organized the collection of more than 36,000 gallons of waste cooking oil to convert into heating fuel for needy families.

- A New Jersey high school junior who co-founded a nonprofit that motivated students at 23 schools to raise money to dig more than 30 water wells in rural India.

"The Prudential Spirit of Community honorees have seen problems in their communities and around the world and have taken action," said Academy Award-winning actress Susan Sarandon, who personally congratulated the 2011 honorees during a gala dinner reception in Washington, D.C. "Their compassion to help others should give us all a lot of hope for the future."

And today, the search is on for the top youth volunteers of 2012.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program is open to



**Susan Sarandon**

students in grades 5–12. Starting in early September, volunteers can apply online at <http://spirit.prudential.com>. The deadline is November 1.

Schools and participating organizations select Local Honorees, whose names are submitted for statewide judging. In February, the top two candidates from each state, including Washington, D.C., are named and receive \$1,000 awards, silver medallions and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

A national selection committee then selects 10 State Honorees as America's top youth volunteers. National Honorees receive \$5,000 awards, gold medallions, crystal trophies for their nominating schools or organizations, and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for a charitable organization of their choice.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, the United States' largest youth recognition program based exclusively on volunteer service, was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The program serves to honor young people who are committed to making a positive difference and to inspire others to consider how they can also contribute to their communities and the world.

For more information about the awards and the honorees, or to learn more about applying, visit <http://spirit.prudential.com>.