

American Teens Are Learning The Joy Of Giving

(NAPSA)—Studies show that American teens think it's cool to volunteer. According to a recent survey by the Independent Sector, the percentage of high school students participating in volunteer activities has increased significantly over the past two decades to 67 percent. Another study found that American teenagers volunteer a remarkable 2.4 billion hours a year.

Evidence of a trend can also be seen in the dramatic growth of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program that honors middle and high school students for their volunteer work. Last year the program had more than 24,000 applicants.

Young people today are engaged in a broad range of volunteer activities. Large numbers are working to aid and comfort the sick, feed the hungry, and assist the disabled. Many others are making a difference by tutoring or mentoring other young people, reaching out to the elderly, protecting the environment, or working on important community projects.

Some are achieving spectacular results. One of this year's Prudential Spirit of Community honorees was an 18-year-old Colorado girl who raised more than \$70,000 to send 20 girls in Tanzania to high school. Another honoree, a middle-school boy in Texas, refurbished 400 used bicycles and then donated them anonymously to kids who have parents in prison.

Also receiving Spirit of Community Awards in 2003 was an eighth-grade homeless girl in Ohio who developed a summer activity program for 250 other homeless kids in her city. And a Florida high school senior was honored for



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writing and publishing what may be the first-ever question-and-answer guide for foster children.

To help ensure that this trend continues among young people, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program will once again recognize students in grades five through twelve who have undertaken noteworthy volunteer projects over the past year, and publicize them as role models for all young people.

Applications are due October 31, 2003, and can be obtained from middle and high school principals, county 4-H agents, Girl Scout councils, Red Cross chapters, YMCAs, Camp Fire USA councils and member Volunteer Centers of the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network.

Applications and program information are also available at www.prudential.com/spirit or by calling 1-888-450-9961.

This program is co-sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.