

Love Thy Neighbor



Volunteering: All About Quality, Not Quantity

(NAPSA)—Through the years, volunteering has often been a force that brings people together. Giving of oneself to help build a better world is seen by many as one of the best ways to respond to difficult times. In fact, all it takes is the whisper of an effort and the hint of desire to be helpful to make an impact—even if it's only on one person.

Kristal DeRuisse of Sparks, Nev., is just 11 years old, but she found a unique way to be helpful that yielded results beyond most adults' imaginations. When Kristal learned that her best friend's mother was diagnosed with lupus, she knew she had to help. She began collecting rocks, painting them to look like ladybugs, and selling them to benefit lupus research. Kristal arranged to have her ladybug rocks sold at a local store and through her mother's office. To date, her simple idea has produced more than \$25,000 to benefit the National Lupus Foundation of America.

"We haven't gotten a cure yet, but we are still trying," says Kristal.

Zachary Ellis, also 11, of Portland, Ore., is still feeling the incredible loss of his sister Alex's death from cancer. Inspired by Alex's memory, Zachary decided to do something to help others suffering from this tragic illness. He remembered how Alex would cheer up when the family would help her do art projects in her hospital bed. So, instead of accepting birthday presents from the 30 friends who attended his 10th



More and more young people are making a difference by helping others.

birthday party, Zachary asked for donations of art supplies. He collected enough supplies to provide 45 hospitalized children with "ChemoPal" activity packs.

"I learned that a good idea is a lot of work, but it's worth it," says Zachary.

Kristal and Zachary's strong desire to lend a helping hand to those in need earned them recognition in The 2003 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program that honors young Americans for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Since the program began in 1996, nearly 50,000 young people have been recognized for volunteer projects both big and small.

If you have a desire to help others, and would like information on how to choose a volunteer project, or if you need more information on how to apply for the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, call 888-450-9961 or visit www.prudential.com/community/spirit.