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Youth Community Service Projects Receive National Recognition by the Prestigious Jefferson Awards

Top project to be honored at national ceremony in Washington, D.C.

WILMINGTON, DE—The Jefferson Awards for Public Service, founded in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Senator Robert Taft Jr. and Sam Beard, has chosen 27 youth service projects from all across the United States to be recognized for their outstanding efforts to make a positive impact on our world!

This year's National Winner is TGIF: Turning Grease into Fuel, from Westerly, Rhode Island. In addition to \$500 in cash, members of TGIF receive a trip to Washington, D.C., to be honored during the Jefferson Awards National Ceremony on June 19, 2013. TGIF has engaged 126 restaurants to collect 138,000 gallons of waste cooking oil, which they have turned into 110,000 gallons of biodiesel that provides emergency heat to the homes of 210 families through partnerships with area non-profits. Their success is a win for the environment as they use a clean-burning alternative, offsetting 2 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, a win for local governments saving millions in unclogging sewers, and finally a win for the needy families.

The selected projects were chosen from submissions to the Jefferson Awards' **Youth Service Challenge**, which took place from October 1, 2012 to April 30, 2013. The focus of the Youth Service Challenge (www.YouthServiceChallenge.net) is to recognize outstanding youth service projects that help make our world a better place. Participants also share their stories of service, get templates for various types of projects, and learn from other students working on similar issues. The Challenge works with Mayors and youth focused organizations across the country to shine a positive spotlight on student-led community service initiatives, while connecting students to the prestige and distinction of the Jefferson Awards and its forty year history of recognizing excellence in public service.

Three projects were selected to be recognized from each of nine service project categories, each winning cash prizes and recognition, both locally and nationally.

"The Youth Service Challenge is about recognizing exceptional youth service wherever it's taking place," said Jefferson Awards founder Sam Beard. "From schools and non-profits to faith-based organizations and inspired individuals, any young American 25 and under with a passion to serve can win."

Full List of Category Winners:

Animal Rights:

First Place: For the Love of Animals, Pittsburgh, PA

Second Place: Owl Exploration, Minneapolis, MN

Third Place: Pitch in 4 Paws, Whippany, NJ

Community Building and Citizenship:

First Place: MDJunior, Alpharetta, GA

Second Place: www.volunTEENnation.org, St. Louis, MO

Third Place: Miles for Merry Miracles, Floyds Knob, IN

Education and Literacy:

First Place: Fishing for Families in Need, Boca Raton, FL

Second Place: X-Change the World, Los Angeles, CA

Third Place: Music to My Ears, Mechanicsville, VA

Elder Care:

First Place: Lori's Hands, Newark, DE

Second Place: Puzzles to Remember / Alzheimer's Advocacy, Natick, MA

Third Place: Alzheimer's Disease: Keeping the Memories Alive, Hillsborough, NJ

Environment and Sustainability:

First Place: TGIF – Turn Grease Into Fuel, Westerly, RI

Second Place: Los Penasquitos Canyon Virtual Trails Project, San Diego, CA

Third Place: The Night Flyers Bat STEM Study, Somerville, TN

Health and Wellness:

First Place: UDance, Wilmington, DE

Second Place: WI P2P2 – Wisconsin Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal, North Freedom, WI

Third Place: Let's Move Healthy and Fit, Northport, NY

Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty:

First Place: Saving Soles, Cranston, RI

Second Place: Houston vs. Hunger, Germantown, TN

Third Place: ISM Against Hunger, Eden Prairie, MN

Peace and Justice:

First Place: Y.O.U.th Filmmakers, Evanston, IL

Second Place: My Name, My Story, West Hills, CA

Third Place: Fleece of Faith, Memphis, TN

Service to Youth:

First Place: Summer Math Blast, Berkeley Heights, NJ

Second Place: Triangle Youth Leadership Services, Beulaville, NC

Third Place: C.A.M.P. – Collegiate Achievement Mentoring Project, St. Augustine, FL

About the Youth Service Challenge – *Recognizing & Inspiring Outstanding Service Projects*



Established in 2010, the Youth Service Challenge (YSC) is open to students of all ages - from pre-school to college. The focus of YSC is to recognize outstanding youth service projects that help make our world a better place. Participants can also share their stories of service, get templates for various types of projects, and learn from other students working on similar issues. Students may enter their project as individuals, teams, or entire schools. Special recognition events will be held in the spring to highlight outstanding student service projects locally, and the best entries from various categories will then be entered into the national level competition. To participate, students enter their projects at www.YouthServiceChallenge.net.

About the Jefferson Awards for Public Service

The Jefferson Awards for Public Service was founded in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr. and Sam Beard to create a Nobel Prize for public and community service. The mission of the Jefferson Awards is to recognize, inspire and activate volunteerism and public service – in communities through our Media Partners, in the workplace through our Champions, and in schools through our Youth Service Initiatives.

www.JeffersonAwards.org.



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