

**Kansas' Top Two Youth Volunteers Selected in 19th Annual National Awards Program**  
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**Eudora and Overland Park students earn \$1,000 awards, engraved medallions and trip to nation's capital**

**Honors also bestowed on youth volunteers in Overland Park, Wichita and Goodland**

Logan Brown, 18, of Eudora and Hannah Thurlby, 12, of Overland Park today were named Kansas' top two youth volunteers of 2014 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Logan was nominated by Free State High School in Topeka, and Hannah was nominated by Harmony Middle School in Overland Park. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, now in its 19th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Logan, a senior at Free State High School, initiated an annual silent auction that has raised more than \$20,000 over the past three years for a local organization that provides services to victims of sexual violence and their families. Logan, who aspires to be a prosecutor someday, began volunteering with her local District Attorney's office in 2008. While there, she discovered that a majority of criminal cases involved alcohol or illegal substances, so she decided to put together a school presentation and website to educate people in her community about the dangers of substance abuse.

During her time in the DA's office, Logan also saw many cases of sexual assault. "I met many victims and witnessed the emotional and physical toll of sexual violence," she said. "I saw that crimes of sexual violence have an especially large impact on the lives of victims and their families. It's heartbreaking." Determined to help, Logan began volunteering at the GaDuGi SafeCenter, which provides support and services to those affected by sexual violence. Upon learning that the center was having difficulty funding its children's program, Logan planned a silent auction to raise money for it. Each year now, she reserves a venue for this event, recruits others to help, secures food and item donations, and advertises. The more than \$20,000 that's resulted from her auctions have enabled GaDuGi to reach out and provide more services to people affected by sexual violence.

Hannah, a seventh-grader at Harmony Middle School, led a seven-member team in launching a blanket-making initiative that has produced hundreds of handsewn blankets for children in foster care. Hannah and her teammates participate in an international educational program called Odyssey of the Mind that challenges its members to solve problems, including problems in their local communities. With that goal, they contacted a local family with 17 children – including 6 foster kids – and asked if they could help. When the family's mother suggested collecting blankets for foster children, Hannah's team decided to make new ones instead.

They took a sewing class, gathered material, and began making blankets, each with a label displaying the name of its maker. After delivering them to the family, the girls realized they didn't want to stop. They decided to enter their project at the annual Odyssey of the Mind competition, where they showed a video on the needs of foster children to 17,000 attendees. Then they set up a booth that enabled other Odyssey students to make their own blankets for foster kids, with lots of fabric donated by a craft store company. A thousand people from 33 states and 10 countries made 350 blankets in three days. The blanket-making operation was named the top Odyssey community service project of 2013. Afterward, Hannah's team began hand-decorating canvas bags in which to package socks and underwear for foster children.

As State Honorees, Logan and Hannah each will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where they will join the top two honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for four days of national recognition events. During the trip, 10 students will be named America's top youth volunteers of 2014.

**Distinguished Finalists**

The program judges also recognized four other Kansas students as Distinguished Finalists for their impressive community service activities. Each will receive an engraved bronze medallion.

These are Kansas' Distinguished Finalists for 2014:

**Hannah Bergwell**, 17, of Overland Park, Kan., a senior at Blue Valley North High School, founded "Art for Autism," a club at her high school and local middle school that provides children on the autism spectrum with a safe and encouraging outlet for self-expression: making art. In addition to coordinating the clubs and training volunteers to help run them, Hannah hosted an art show featuring the students' artwork that brought in \$8,000 to support the organization Autism Speaks.

**Megan Keller**, 17, of Wichita, Kan., a junior at Northwest High School, has helped to raise more than \$14,000 for the Children's Miracle Network with her fashion fundraiser event, "Models for Miracles." Megan, who was motivated to volunteer with the Children's Miracle Network by her younger brother, who was born prematurely, also is the co-president of the organization's Teen Advisory Board.

**Anne Schugart**, 17, of Overland Park, Kan., a senior at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, founded the "Overland Park Teen Council," an organization that gives teen leaders a voice in their community. Anne also founded the "National Teen Council," a committee of young student leaders across the country who conduct service projects and help to empower America's youth.

**Kinsey Volk**, 15, of Goodland, Kan., a freshman at Goodland High School, co-hosted a "Feed My Starving Children" community food-packing event at which 800 volunteers packed 131,000 meals for starving children in El Salvador. Kinsey, inspired by her attendance at a similar pack meeting, also helped to raise more than \$31,000 through 15 fundraising events including a "Cajun Boil."

"We applaud each of these young people for their exemplary volunteer service," said Prudential Chairman and CEO John Strangfeld. "They use their time and talents to make a meaningful difference in their communities, and we hope their example inspires others to do the same."

"By going above and beyond in their volunteer service, these students have brought positive change to communities across the country," said JoAnn Bartoletti, executive director of NASSP. "Congratulations to each and every one of them on this well-deserved honor."

### **About The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards**

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards represents the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service. All public and private middle level and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and HandsOn Network affiliates, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award. These Local Honorees were then reviewed by an independent judging panel, which selected State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists based on criteria including personal initiative, effort, impact and personal growth.

While in Washington, D.C., the 102 State Honorees – one middle level and one high school student from each state and the District of Columbia – will tour the capital's landmarks, meet top youth volunteers from other parts of the world, attend a gala awards ceremony at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, and visit their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill. On May 5, 10 of the State Honorees – five middle level and five high school students – will be named America's top youth volunteers of 2014. These National Honorees will receive additional \$5,000 awards, gold medallions, crystal trophies and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit charitable organizations of their choice.

Since the program began in 1995, more than 100,000 young volunteers have been honored at the local, state and national level. The program also is conducted by Prudential subsidiaries in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Ireland, India and China. In addition to granting its own awards, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program also distributes President's Volunteer Service Awards to qualifying Local Honorees on behalf of President Barack Obama.

For information on all of this year's Prudential Spirit of Community State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists, visit <http://spirit.prudential.com> or [www.nassp.org/spirit](http://www.nassp.org/spirit).

### **About NASSP**

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the leading organization of and national

voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and all school leaders from across the United States and more than 36 countries around the world. The association connects and engages school leaders through advocacy, research, education, and student programs. NASSP advocates on behalf of all school leaders to ensure the success of each student and strengthens school leadership practices through the design and delivery of high quality professional learning experiences. Reflecting its long-standing commitment to student leadership development, NASSP administers the [National Honor Society](#), [National Junior Honor Society](#), [National Elementary Honor Society](#), and [National Association of Student Councils](#). For more information about NASSP, located in Reston, VA, visit [www.nassp.org](http://www.nassp.org).

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**Editors: For full-color pictures of the Spirit of Community Awards program logo and medallions, click here: <http://bit.ly/Xi4oFW>**

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