

Two New York Youth Honored for Volunteerism at National Award Ceremony in Washington, D.C.
Monday, May 02, 2016 06:01:00 PM (GMT)

Academy Award-winning actress Hilary Swank pays tribute to Bellerose and Roslyn Heights students

New York's top two youth volunteers of 2016, Dimple Belani, 17, of Bellerose and Cole Faller, 13, of Roslyn Heights, were honored in the nation's capital last night for their outstanding volunteer service during the 21st annual presentation of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Dimple and Cole – along with 100 other top youth volunteers from across the country – each received \$1,000 awards and personal congratulations from Academy Award-winning actress Hilary Swank at an award ceremony and gala dinner reception held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160502005517/en/>



Academy Award-winning actress Hilary Swank congratulates Dimple Belani, 17, of Bellerose (center) and Cole Faller, 13, of Roslyn Heights (right) on being named New York's top two youth volunteers for 2016 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Dimple and Cole were honored at a ceremony on Sunday, May 1 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, where they each received a \$1,000 award. (Photo: Zach Harrison Photography)

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), named Dimple and Cole New York's top high school and middle level youth volunteers in February. In addition to their cash awards, they each received an engraved silver medallion and an all-expense-paid trip with a parent to Washington, D.C., for four days of recognition events.

Dimple, a member of the Girl Scouts of Greater New York and a senior at Bronx High

School of Science, produced a series of episodes for a public television station featuring interviews with accomplished women to inspire young girls to pursue higher education and their dream careers. In 2012, Dimple visited the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in London and learned about the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which include promoting gender equality and empowering women. She was inspired to embark on a project that incorporated the UN goals, one that would promote higher education and career choices for women. "From an early age, I was encouraged by my mother and my Girl Scout leaders to dream big and follow my heart, but many other girls were not as fortunate," she said. "So I firmed my resolve to provide support to girls who could not pursue their dreams, or who were compelled to change their goals."

Dimple assembled a production team, including a script writer, director, editor, and a light and sound technician, and then interviewed on camera a different professional woman each month. They included a lawyer, school principal, CEO, doctor, navy pilot, computer engineer and guidance counselor. Each was

asked to tell “how they were able to overcome financial hurdles, social pressures and gender discrimination, and pursue higher education to realize their dreams,” said Dimple. After she oversaw the post-production process, the interviews were broadcast on a local public TV station. Dimple, who plans to eventually pursue a medical degree, has received requests to produce more interviews, and said she will continue with this project well into the future.

Cole, a seventh-grader at Roslyn Middle School, helped start an annual community-wide flag football event that has raised nearly \$50,000 over the past three years to support young people with autism. When Cole was in fourth grade, he participated as a mentor in an after-school program for kids with special needs, and became good friends with an autistic boy named Luke. “Luke has autism,” Cole said at the time. “It’s okay, autism is just a different way of thinking.” Cole wanted other kids to appreciate the importance of embracing differences, and also wanted to raise money for Luke’s future needs. So, with the help of his family, he planned a small flag football game.

The idea quickly took off, and word of the event spread through the community. On the day of the games, more than 120 youngsters showed up at a local park to play, along with a large number of spectators, a DJ, a tattoo artist and caterers. The event, called “Go Long for Luke,” was so successful it’s been held twice since then, raising more money and awareness each year for those with autism.

“By using their time and talents to better their communities, these young people have achieved great things – and become examples for us all,” said John Strangfeld, chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc. “Congratulations to an exemplary group of honorees.”

“These students have demonstrated a truly remarkable level of leadership and commitment in the course of their volunteer service, and it’s an honor to celebrate their accomplishments,” said Michael Allison, president of NASSP. “We commend each and every one of them for a job well done.”

Youth volunteers in grades 5-12 were invited to apply for 2016 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards last fall through schools, Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and affiliates of the HandsOn Network. More than 29,000 middle level and high school students nationwide participated in this year’s program.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program was created in 1995 to identify and recognize young people for outstanding volunteer service – and, in so doing, inspire others to volunteer, too. In the past 21 years, the program has honored more than 115,000 young volunteers at the local, state and national level.

For more information about The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and this year’s honorees, visit <http://spirit.prudential.com> or www.nassp.org/spirit.

About NASSP

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the leading organization of and voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and school leaders from across the United States. 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

About Prudential Financial

Prudential Financial, Inc. (NYSE: PRU), a financial services leader, has operations in the United States, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Prudential’s diverse and talented employees are committed to helping individual and institutional customers grow and protect their wealth through a variety of products and services, including life insurance, annuities, retirement-related services, mutual funds and investment management. In the U.S., Prudential’s iconic Rock symbol has stood for strength, stability, expertise and innovation for more than a century. For more information, please visit www.news.prudential.com.

Editors: For pictures of the Spirit of Community Awards program logo and medallions, click here:

<http://bit.ly/Xi4oFW>

For B-roll of New York's honorees at the 2016 national recognition events, contact Prudential's Harold Banks at (973) 216-4833 or harold.banks@prudential.com.

View source version on businesswire.com: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160502005517/en/>

--30-- WM/NY

Contact:

Prudential
Harold Banks, (w) 973-802-8974 or (c) 973-216-4833
harold.banks@prudential.com
or
NASSP
Robert Farrace, 703-860-7257

Copyright Business Wire 2016
1.2

Industries: Education, Primary/Secondary, Continuing, Philanthropy, Professional Services, Banking, Finance, Children, Insurance, Teens, Other Philanthropy, Consumer

Languages: English

Primary Identifiers: PRU-US

Related Identifiers: PRU-US

Source: Prudential Financial, Inc.

Subjects: Award, Photo/Multimedia