

**Two Kansas Youth Honored for Volunteerism at National Award Ceremony in Washington, D.C.**  
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***Academy Award-winning actor Forest Whitaker pays tribute to Eudora and Overland Park students***

Kansas' top two youth volunteers of 2014, Logan Brown, 18, of Eudora and Hannah Thurlby, 13, of Overland Park, were honored in the nation's capital last night for their outstanding volunteer service during the 19<sup>th</sup> annual presentation of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Logan and Hannah – along with 100 other top youth volunteers from across the country – each received \$1,000 awards and personal congratulations from Academy Award-winning actor Forest Whitaker at an award ceremony and gala dinner reception held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.



Academy Award-winning actor Forest Whitaker congratulates Logan Brown, 18, of Eudora (center) and Hannah Thurlby, 13, of Overland Park (right) on being named Kansas's top two youth volunteers for 2014 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Logan and Hannah were honored at a ceremony on Sunday, May 4 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, where they each received a \$1,000 award. (Photo: Business Wire)

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), named Logan and Hannah Kansas' 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.

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.

"These honorees are shining examples of what is possible when young people use their energy and initiative to help their communities," said John Strangfeld, chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc. "We are proud to recognize their accomplishments, and look forward to seeing the great things they achieve in the future."

"Through their service, these students have not only made a difference in the lives of others – they've provided their peers with a powerful example of what it looks like to be an outstanding youth volunteer," said Barbara-Jane (BJ) Paris, president of NASSP. "Congratulations to each of the 2014 honorees for a job well done."

Youth volunteers in grades 5-12 were invited to apply for 2014 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 30,000 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 19 years, the program has honored more than 100,000 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](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>

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/multimedia/home/20140505005587/en/>

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