

Two Oregon youth honored for volunteerism at national award ceremony in Washington, D.C.
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Olympic gold medalist and World Cup champion Lindsey Vonn pays tribute to Portland students

WASHINGTON, April 30, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Oregon's top two youth volunteers of 2018, Malcolm Asher, 16 and Irie Page, 14, both of Portland, were honored in the nation's capital last night for their outstanding volunteer service during the 23rd annual presentation of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Malcolm and Irie – along with 100 other top youth volunteers from across the country – each received \$1,000 awards and personal congratulations from Olympic gold medalist and World Cup champion Lindsey Vonn at an award ceremony and gala dinner reception held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

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

Malcolm, a junior at Cleveland High School, founded a nonprofit organization that is helping hospitalized youth on four continents make and share art, to alleviate the fear and anxiety that kids often experience in the hospital. While volunteering at a children's hospital in Portland, Malcolm said that he "discovered how isolating and naturally scary it was" for the young patients. He also saw a 7-year-old girl draw a picture of the Golden Gate Bridge and share it with other patients. "I could plainly see what a lift this provided to kids who were feeling anxious and scared," said Malcolm. "It was incredible to see the impact it had on both sides."

As a result, Malcolm decided he wanted to volunteer for an organization that promoted the sharing of art among hospital patients, but couldn't find one. So, he launched his own and called it "ArtPass." He sought advice from other teenagers who had started nonprofits, met with healthcare providers and child life specialists, created a website, recruited a team of Portland teens to help, and sought financial support. Once up and running, Malcolm's organization began providing art kits to hospitalized children who requested them, and then matching those kids with other patients in the same hospital to exchange artwork. ArtPass now includes 24 chapters in 11 countries. Through its art initiatives, Malcolm's program also aims to encourage kids in developing countries to seek out critical medical attention, rather than hide their symptoms for fear of an unpleasant stay in an under-resourced hospital.

Irie, an eighth-grader at Micha-el School, organized a free public educational event that presented information about safe dating to hundreds of young people and their parents. Irie was inspired to do something important for her 14th birthday after hearing a speech by Nobel Prize recipient Malala Yousafzai. "She said 'everyone's voice matters,' and that really stayed with me," said Irie. Having heard about a nationally recognized author and educator who speaks about sexual violence and the importance of consent, Irie decided to invite him to an event that she would host.

She raised money for the author's speaking fee by setting up a GoFundMe account and soliciting sponsorships from local businesses. Then she persuaded Portland State University to let her use a recital hall; reached out for information from the police department, the district attorney's office and sexual assault crisis centers; and publicized her event by giving interviews to local news media. Approximately 500 teens and adults attended Irie's event in November. The author was so impressed with her efforts that he waived his fee, enabling Irie to donate the funds instead to local organizations working to prevent sexual violence. "I believe that to create change you have to start with education," she said.

"These honorees exemplify something we've known for a long time – that young volunteers have the power to bring meaningful change to their communities," said John Strangfeld, chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc. "These students have shown leadership and determination well beyond their years, and it's a privilege to celebrate their service."

"Through their acts of service, these honorees drive home a powerful lesson for their peers: that one student really can make a difference," said Daniel P. Kelley, president of NASSP. "We are honored to shine a spotlight on the compassion, drive and ingenuity of each of these young volunteers."

Youth volunteers in grades 5-12 were invited to apply for 2018 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards last fall through schools, Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and affiliates of Points of Light's 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 23 years, the program has honored more than 120,000 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 principals and other school leaders across the United States. NASSP seeks to transform education through school leadership, recognizing that the fulfillment of each student's potential relies on great leaders in every school committed to the success of each student. 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 Student Council. Learn more at www.nassp.org.

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

<https://spirit.prudential.com/resources/media>.

For B-roll of Oregon's honorees at the 2018 national recognition events, contact Prudential's Harold Banks at (973) 216-4833 or harold.banks@prudential.com.

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