

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Harold Banks, Prudential 973-802-8974 (office),  
973-216-4833 (cell), harold.banks@prudential.com

## **15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SEARCH UNDER WAY FOR NATION'S TOP YOUTH VOLUNTEERS**

### ***Recognition Program Honors Outstanding Middle and High School Youth at Local, State and National Levels***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Over the past 14 years, Prudential Spirit of Community Awards have been given to nearly 90,000 middle and high school students across the country for helping the less fortunate, promoting health and safety, protecting the environment, and serving their communities through many other volunteer activities. This week the search begins to identify thousands more who have made meaningful contributions to their communities over the past 12 months, as the prestigious awards program kicks off its 15<sup>th</sup> year.

These awards, sponsored by Prudential Financial, Inc. in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), honor outstanding community service by young people in grades 5 through 12 at the local, state and national level.

“Young people who take the initiative to serve their communities through volunteerism are a great source of strength for our nation, and give us ample reason to be optimistic about the future,” said Prudential Chairman and CEO John R. Strangfeld. “We want to recognize them, encourage them, and hold them up as role models for all young Americans.”

Young volunteers can apply online at <http://spirit.prudential.com> or at [www.principals.org/prudential](http://www.principals.org/prudential). Applications must be completed by November 2, 2009, then printed out, signed and submitted to a middle or high school principal, Girl Scout council, county 4-H agent, American Red Cross chapter, YMCA, or affiliate of HandsOn Network. Those without Internet access can get a paper version of the application form by calling 877-525-8491 toll-free.

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Participating schools and local organizations will select Local Honorees in early November and present them with Certificates of Achievement. These Local Honorees also will receive the President's Volunteer Service Award if they have contributed the minimum number of volunteer hours to qualify (50 hours for age 14 and younger, 100 hours for those older). All Local Honorees are then reviewed by a state-level judging committee, which will name the top two candidates from each state and the District of Columbia – one high school student and one middle level student – as State Honorees on February 9, 2010. These State Honorees will receive \$1,000 awards, engraved silver medallions, and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., with a parent for four days of recognition events May 1-4, 2010. Runners-up at the state level will receive bronze medallions or Certificates of Excellence.

In Washington, a distinguished national selection committee will name 10 of the 102 State Honorees as America's top youth volunteers of the year. These National Honorees will receive additional awards of \$5,000, gold medallions, crystal trophies for their nominating schools or organizations, and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit, charitable organizations of their choice.

“The rewards that an individual receives from serving his or her community aren't often tangible, but they are lasting,” stated Gerald N. Tirozzi, executive director of NASSP. “We are pleased to once again join with Prudential in recognizing this nation's youth volunteers, offering the honorees both tangible and memorable tokens of appreciation for the work that they've done.”

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards represent the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service. The program is part of a broad youth-service initiative by Prudential that includes a youth leadership training program administered by the Points of Light Institute; a free booklet of volunteer ideas for young people offered through the Federal Citizen Information Center; and a website featuring profiles of outstanding youth volunteers, volunteer tips and project ideas for students, an electronic newspaper on youth volunteerism, and more (<http://spirit.prudential.com>). The Spirit of Community Awards program also is conducted by Prudential subsidiaries in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Ireland.

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In existence since 1916, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the preeminent organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. NASSP's mission is to promote excellence in school leadership. The National Honor Society®, National Junior Honor Society®, National Elementary Honor Society™, and National Association of Student Councils® are all NASSP programs. For more information about NASSP, located in Reston, Va., visit [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org) or call 703-860-0200.

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