



JEFFERSON AWARDS
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Youth Service Challenge Seeks Outstanding Young People to Recognize Excellence in Community Service

PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR PRIZES EXCEEDING \$100,000 IN VALUE

Pittsburgh, Pa., March 13, 2013 - The Jefferson Awards for Public Service's Youth Service Challenge is seeking outstanding young people, ages 5-25, who are involved in meaningful community service projects throughout the Pittsburgh region. Participants in the Youth Service Challenge are eligible to receive local and national recognition, as well as cash prizes and celebrity visits. One group will win a trip to be honored as the "Youth Service Challenge Project of the Year" at the Jefferson Awards National Ceremonies in Washington, D.C. in June.

Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl is a proud supporter of the Youth Service Challenge.

Bobby Catley of Aliquippa, Pa. was the National Winner in the Health and Wellness category in 2012. Of his experience, Catley says, "Planning, organizing and executing my project was one of the most exciting experiences of my life, but winning the national title in the Health and Wellness category really put into perspective the importance of giving back to the community and making a difference. I would highly recommend that anyone who does community service to participate in the Youth Service Challenge."

Participants can sign up at www.YouthServiceChallenge.net. **The deadline to enter is April 30, 2013.** The goal of the Youth Service Challenge is to honor and recognize excellence in youth service wherever it is found: in schools, non-profits, faith-based organizations or inspired individuals wanting to give back. Everyone under the age of 25 is eligible. Projects coordinated by individual students, teams or groups, or those that involve entire schools or clubs are eligible. Submitted

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projects need to have taken place between Oct. 1, 2012 and April 30, 2013. Entries will first be judged on a local level, with the top projects rising to the national competition.

The Youth Service Challenge is led by The Jefferson Awards for Public Service and seeks to promote youth leadership and volunteerism in several areas—including Animal Rights; Community Building and Citizenship; Education and Literacy; Elder Care; Environment and Sustainability; Health and Wellness; Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty; Peace and Justice; and Service to Youth—or through projects of the students’ own choosing. The Youth Service Challenge is a nationwide effort to shine a light on students in service and to engage one million youth over three years in student-led service projects.

Students interested in leading or participating in a service project can find “How To” kits on the Youth Service Challenge website (www.YouthServiceChallenge.net). The online kits have been designed to train students to lead a project. Students also can register a project of their own.

“Not only are we challenging young people to get involved in the issues they care about most, we are helping supercharge their efforts by giving them access to great project templates, media toolkits and social networking tools,” said Rebecca Farabaugh, Pittsburgh Regional Coordinator for the Jefferson Awards. “We can’t wait to see - and highlight - all the great things they’re doing to make the Pittsburgh region, and the world, a better place.”

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is participating as a National Outreach Partner. Through the U.S. Conference of Mayors, more than 130 mayors have participated in the challenge over the past two years by encouraging and highlighting service excellence in their cities.

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ABOUT THE JEFFERSON AWARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

In 1972, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr. and Sam Beard founded the Jefferson Awards as the 'Nobel Prize' for Public Service. Today, the mission of the Jefferson Awards is to 'recognize, inspire and activate volunteerism and public service in communities, workplaces and schools across America'. The Jefferson Awards works with over 150 television stations, radio stations and newspapers across the country to recognize and encourage grassroots 'Unsung Heroes.' With Deloitte, the Jefferson Awards has created *Students In Action* (SIA) to multiply youth service driven by student leaders. As of June 2010, SIA was in more than 300 schools in nine communities. www.jeffersonawards.org

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