

# NEWS

## OF YOUTH

### A Growing Trend: Youngsters Improving Their Communities

(NAPSA)—In sharp contrast to the typical stereotypes of today's teenagers, thousands of young Americans are doing extraordinary things to make their communities better places to live.

Among them is Kate Klinkerman, 15, of Inez, Texas. When Kate saw her dad pouring used motor oil alongside their barn—a common way to control weeds and pests on farms—she worried about the effect it might have on their groundwater. So she spearheaded a recycling program that now processes more than 2,000 gallons of oil and hydraulic fluid every month.

Michael Kay saw a different need in his town of Wilmington, Ill. Growing up with a disabled brother he knew how awkwardly most people react to those who are different, and how isolated and lonely handicapped people often feel as a result. In response, the 14-year old conceived a program that is now providing activities and companionship for 61 handicapped group home residents through “buddy” relationships with middle and high school students.

Both are examples of students who care deeply about the needs they see around them, and are passionately committed to addressing those needs.

Fortunately, remarkable young people like these are beginning to receive the recognition they deserve. Kate and Michael received national Prudential Spirit of Community Awards this year, the nation's most prestigious honor for youth volunteers. As a result, they each were presented with a \$5,000 award, an engraved



**A unique program is giving youngsters who improve their communities the recognition they deserve.**

gold medallion and a crystal trophy by U.S. Senators Lincoln Chafee and Jon Corzine in Washington, D.C.

More than 30,000 other young volunteers have been honored with local, state and national Prudential Spirit of Community Awards in the six years since the program was created by Prudential and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The program is now looking for more young people in grades 5-12 who deserve recognition for their volunteer activities. Applications are available through middle level and high schools, Girl Scout councils and county 4-H organizations. They may also be obtained at [www.prudential.com](http://www.prudential.com) or by calling 888-450-9961. Applications must be submitted by October 31.