

A Decade Of Service By Young People

(NAPSA)—Over the past 10 years, more than 60,000 middle and high school students across the country have been recognized for doing something seldom associated with teenagers: volunteering.

Rather than spending all their free time socializing, shopping, skateboarding or playing video games, these young heroes—all honorees in the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program—have devoted significant time and energy to making their communities better places to live. And they have had a remarkable effect on a wide variety of important causes.

What kinds of causes are they most interested in? A recent study of the program's top 1,000 honorees revealed that the most popular volunteer activity is helping sick or disabled people. Twenty-two percent of the honorees pursued this goal, by raising money for medical treatment and research, providing support and cheer to ill children, conducting public information campaigns and working with disabled kids and adults.

Projects to aid the disadvantaged were almost as prevalent, undertaken by 20 percent of the honorees. Most of these focused on feeding the hungry or collecting needed items for poor fami-

lies, homeless people, foster children, victims of abuse or violence and others in desperate or difficult circumstances.

Other causes that attracted considerable effort from the young volunteers included:

Enhancing school or community resources; teaching, tutoring or mentoring other young people; promoting health and safety; reaching out to senior citizens; protecting the environment; addressing needs in other countries; promoting tolerance or diversity; and taking care of animals.

“Despite common stereotypes, many young Americans are clearly concerned about the broad range of needs that exist in most communities and they are taking action to address those needs,” said Scott Peterson, executive director of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Every year, the awards program, which is co-sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, searches for more young people in grades 5 through 12 who have distinguished themselves through volunteer work. For more information about the program and its honorees, visit www.prudential.com/spirit.

What Young Volunteers Are Doing

• Helping/comforting the sick and disabled	22.2%
• Aiding the disadvantaged	20.2%
• Enhancing school or community resources	10.0%
• Teaching, tutoring or mentoring other young people	9.4%
• Promoting health and safety	9.1%
• Reaching out to senior citizens	6.7%
• Protecting the environment	4.7%
• Addressing needs in other countries	3.4%
• Promoting tolerance or diversity	1.9%
• Providing disaster relief	1.8%
• Taking care of animals	1.6%
• Supporting/honoring servicemen and women	0.9%
• Helping in other ways	8.1%