



TEEN TOPICS

Sense Of Community For America's Young People

(NAPSA)—As young Americans head back to school this fall to learn their ABCs, many are also reconnecting with another important lesson: the Golden Rule. Helping others is not a new concept, but it is clear that the tragic events of September 11 have caused an increasing number of young people to think about the importance of volunteering in their communities.

Kristina Packer, 15, of Lewiston, Idaho, expressed her desire to make a difference by giving disadvantaged students a chance to play in her school's band. When she learned that a friend could not join the band because he could not afford a musical instrument, Packer solicited donations of gently used instruments to enable five new students to join the band. She plans to continue her project so she can give the gift of music to more people who need a little help to make their dreams come true.

Bryan Frost, a 13 year old from Eddyville, Neb., is another example. He heard about a 2-year-old girl suffering from leukemia, and felt he could help the child and her family by holding a raffle to raise money for them. He approached local businesses to donate raffle items, encouraged his 4-H Club to get involved, and in the end raised \$300—an amount some may not consider large, but one that meant a great deal to a family in crisis.

Nichole Magnifico, 18, of Warwick, R.I., made dreams come true for six mentally challenged girls by coaching the first-ever special-needs cheerleading squad in her state. Magnifico, a volunteer at a



Teen volunteers are making a difference in their communities, and are being honored by a national awards program.

center for the handicapped, realized the girls there needed something to help them “come out of their shells” and interact with others. So she proposed a cheerleading squad, and began training the six girls who signed up. She not only coached the girls, but also coordinated fund-raisers to purchase uniforms and arranged for the squad to cheer for a Special Olympics basketball team.

Packer, Frost and Magnifico were recognized for their spirit of volunteerism this year by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a national program that honors middle- and high-school youth volunteers in every state. The program is currently looking for more outstanding examples of community service by young people. Students in grades 5-12 have until October 31 to apply. Applications are available at www.prudential.com/community/spirit and <http://dsa.principals.org/awards>, or by calling 1-888-450-9961.