

America's Youth Are Making A Difference

Young People Taking Giant Steps Toward Making Their World A Better Place

(NAPSA)—Despite common assumptions that today's youth are self-centered and socially apathetic, new data suggests that young people are serving their communities like never before. A survey by Kohl's Department Stores found that 88 percent of American families have at least one child between the ages of 6 and 18 who regularly volunteers their time to help others.

While many youths volunteer in conjunction with their involvement in school and religious groups or community organizations, some outstanding individuals are creating their own opportunities for service.

One wouldn't think a teenage girl from Michigan could single-handedly affect the lives of impoverished children living in a small third-world country, but Kori Smith has done just that. Experiencing the needs of the world's humanity first hand, this 18-year-old has founded Teens for Humanity, a 25-member organization that takes relief trips to countries like Brazil and Guatemala to help the world's needy.

In suburban Ohio, it's not photos of sports or music icons that adorn the bedroom wall of Billy Martin—it's framed photos of K-9 police dogs. These dogs are the real heroes to Billy. This ambitious 10-year-old started a program called "Bite the Bullet" to protect police dogs throughout the state by making public speeches and raising money for special canine bulletproof vests.

To recognize those like Smith and Martin, Kohl's recently launched a program to recognize young people who are making a difference. Through its Kohl's Kids Who Care™ program, the department store chain conducts an annual search for the most caring youth in America.

"The volunteer efforts of these young people and the way they are making a difference in their com-



munities are inspirational, and Kohl's feels these actions should be recognized and rewarded," said Julie Gardner, senior vice president of marketing for Kohl's. "By setting this positive example, we hope more young people will become involved in making a difference where they live."

Winners are selected by Kohl's at the local, regional and national levels. Two winners at each Kohl's store receive a \$50 Kohl's gift card. Regional winners are awarded a \$1,000 post-secondary education scholarship, and national winners receive a \$5,000 scholarship. In

2001, over 4,300 nominations were submitted, yielding 65 regional and 10 national winners.

The most profound impact of youth service lies not only in the monetary savings (teenagers volunteer 2.4 billion hours annually, translating to \$34.3 billion to the U.S. economy), but the beneficiaries of the service. One person can make a difference in the lives of others. Nearly 75 percent of young people today believe their efforts can have a positive impact on their communities, and they are changing their world to make it a better place.