



**RILEY INSTITUTE'S EMERGING PUBLIC
LEADERS PROGRAM ANNOUNCES
2008 SERVICE PROJECT WINNERS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GREENVILLE, S.C. –Emerging Public Leaders, a service-oriented, leadership program for high school seniors, sponsored by the Richard W. Riley Institute at Furman University and funded by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, has announced the winners of its public service project competition.

Emerging Public Leaders is an innovative program designed to provide public leadership skills and knowledge to high school seniors. Participants are required to spend a week at Furman during the summer, when they attend lectures and group sessions with government leaders and Furman political science faculty, and then plan and implement a public service project during their senior year. The project should address a need in the student's community. Students are then invited to return to Furman the following spring to present their completed public service projects. Winners are awarded cash prizes to continue their project or donate to a related organization or foundation.

Students returned to Furman on March 14-15, 2008 to present their completed public service projects. Please see below for a list of winners.

For more information, contact the Riley Institute at 864-294-3236 or visit <http://www.furman.edu/riley/programs/emerging.htm>.

MORE

The 2008 Emerging Public Leaders service project winners are:

1st place (\$2000)

Athena Lao, Clarke Central High School, Athens, GA

Athena partnered with students from 3 other high schools in her area to form Young Partners for a Prosperous Athens (YPPA). This organization set out to combat Athens' 31% poverty rate by promoting education, bridging together different cultures and facilitating service projects that included a day-long youth summit on poverty, Battle Against Poverty Festival in the community and a Summer Literacy Campaign.

2nd place (\$2000)

Luis Gonzales, Greenville High School, Greenville, SC

Luis partnered with Bridges To A Brighter Future and Greenville Tech Northwest Campus to sponsor the first Hispanic College Fair in the area. Hispanic students from the area attended and were able to hear about college admissions information and financial aid opportunities from Berea College, Bob Jones University, The Citadel, College of Charleston, Erskine, Furman, Greenville Tech, Morris College, SC State, USC Upstate, and representatives from FASFA.

3rd place tie (\$500 each)

Drew Callaghan, Holy Ghost Preparatory School, Bensalem, PA

Drew implemented the Kids Helping Kids Food Pantry Collection. The aim of this project was to continue to raise awareness of hunger and homelessness in his community of Bucks County, PA by establishing supplemental funding through a state grant to the Bucks County Housing Group, and continuing collection drives by expanding to include local public schools.

Ahn Lee, Socastee High School, Myrtle Beach, SC

Ahn's Powering Against Poverty project raised awareness about the growing problem of homelessness in the Myrtle Beach area in addition to collecting food and funding to help those in poverty. She partnered with The Helping Hands Organization and Habitat for Humanity.

Honorable Mention

Hannah Shadrick, Girls Preparatory School, Chattanooga, TN

Hannah organized groups of students to assist at a local homeless shelter and soup kitchen and also worked with staff to institute an on-going program to provide residents of the homeless shelter with opportunities to explore the visual arts.

Alyssa Richardson, Ridge View High School, Columbia, SC

Alyssa's RIDE(Ridge View's Interdependent Driving Experiment) project aimed to decrease traffic problems, cut down on pollution and promote unity throughout the community by encouraging carpooling and other forms of public transportation.

Other EPL Participants:

Alana Dillon, Turpin High School, Cincinnati, OH

Alana partnered with the Anderson Park District and the Turpin High School Key Club to encourage local students to give back to the community through cleaning up a local park. Alana and the others scheduled a work day in October to clean up Johnson Hills Park in order to ready it for the upcoming opening day.

Anna Lynn Doster, Camden High School, Camden SC

Anna Lynn developed her Step It Up project because she recognized a problem with the high school drop out rate in both her school and state. She aimed to make a difference in her school's drop out rate by encouraging the formation of non-traditional clubs and organizations that would attract students who currently have no extracurricular activities or who are on the verge of dropping out. At Camden High School, she formed a step team, an animal awareness club, and an anime club, all of which included a majority of students with no prior extracurricular involvement.

Anna Eusebio, Grimsley High School, Greensboro, NC

Anna's project, Bottled H²O project connected water conservation with the environmental impacts of bottled water. She partnered with the Greensboro Water Department and presented to fourth graders at Canterbury School and Our Lady of Grace Catholic School.

Meredith Gill, Spring Valley High School, Columbia, SC

Meredith's Book Bonanza provided books for the underprivileged and inspired people of all ages to experience the comfort and opportunities provided through reading. She collected 7,200 books which were donated to various agencies in Columbia including The Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Salvation Army, Children's Miracle Network Hospital, Ronald McDonald House and others.

Anna Gillespie, Greenwood High School, Greenwood, SC

With her Every Vote Counts project, Anna endeavored to help students her age become politically active and aware by informing them of their eligibility to vote, holding a voter registration drive at her school and providing literature on voting. She exceeded her goal of registering 100 students (1/3 of her class) and ended up registering 185 students!

Jay Ingles, Eastside High School, Greenville, SC

Jay created the Shooting for Success program, which aimed to bring sports and character education to underprivileged youth. Jay partnered with the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club in Greenville, the Greenville Civitan Club and Eastside High School to develop a basketball clinic that would help students improve their skills. The clinic also involved a character education component that included a motivational speaker. The participants of the clinic were also invited to attend an Eastside High School basketball game later in the school year.

Lathrum Johnson, Marlboro Academy, Bennettsville, SC

Lathrum worked with the Bennettsville Downtown Development Association, Marlboro Academy, Marlboro High School, Bennettsville Chamber of Commerce and First United Methodist Church to accomplish his “Our Town” plan. They accomplished their goal of revitalizing and beautifying Bennettsville by restoring an outdoor amphitheatre in town. Lathrum and his partnering agencies cleaned up the grounds, replaced old structures, and added shrubbery, park benches and outdoor lighting.

Caitlin Jebens, Strom Thurmond High School, Johnston, SC

Caitlin’s Mock Debate project provided the public with an opportunity to learn more about the candidates running for the presidential election. Local students portrayed and presented platforms for Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards, John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee. Local political leaders also served as moderators.

Mikaela Shaw, McAuley High School, Cincinnati, OH

In an effort to unite high school students of diverse backgrounds while at the same time assisting the Churches Active in Northside (CAIN) food pantry, Mikaela formed a teen advisory board known as Teens Working Together As One. This advisory board of students from diverse backgrounds planned individual projects at their school, church or in their community in order to collect money or items for CAIN while at the same time volunteering at the food pantry.

Miya Walker, Byrnes High School, Spartanburg, SC

Miya's "We Love Senior Citizens Month" initiative provided volunteers, care packages and a fun-filled day of Bingo to the Midway Boarding Home. She partnered with Byrnes High School Junior Civitan Club and with the Middle Tyger Community Center in order to provide activities that would engage and entertain senior citizens in her community.

Mia Wrightson, Parkview High School, Lawrenceville, GA

With her Recycling and Environmental Awareness Program, Mia's goal was to begin school recycling education and increase recycling awareness in children and young adults by coordinating plastic and aluminum collection programs at her high school and a local elementary school, collaborating with a Special Education class to collect cans as a fundraiser, and teaching recycling lessons at a local elementary school.