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Bryant wins prestigious service project competition

By **Jim Fair**, Editor
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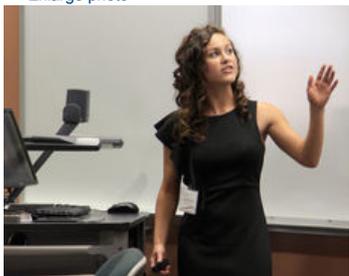
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Furman University Photo

Kehler Bryant of Blue Ridge won with her project, "Healthy Tips for Happy Kids".

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Furman University Photo

Kehler Bryant recorded local athletes who gave healthy tips. These public service announcements were broadcast on the Skyland Elementary School morning news program.

to achieve anything," Bryant said.

Drummond's project combined his passion for photography with his enthusiasm to give back to society. He spent two days using a corner of the dining room at the Spartanburg soup kitchen as a makeshift studio and took holiday portraits for people who otherwise might not be able to buy a photo for the holidays.

"The Emerging Public Leaders Program has changed my life forever," Drummond said. "I'm not just a student who wants to make a change, but I'm a student who made a change. To grow up in a family where helping others is a must, I discovered that my purpose in life is not to be the best that I can, but to make an impact on someone else's life."

Second place (\$600) were awarded to:

Students from Blue Ridge High School and Dorman High School are winners of the service project competition held at the Richard W. Riley Institute at Furman University.

Kehler Bryant of Blue Ridge won for her project, "Healthy Tips for Happy Kids". Dorman's Jeremiah Drummond's project, "Picture a Family Together" also won in the institute's Emerging Public Leaders (EPL) program.

Bryant and Drummond each received \$1,000 to expand or replicate projects.

Student projects are judged on the basis of vision, planning, execution, program impact, presentation skills, and project sustainability. Winners are awarded cash prizes to expand or replicate projects.

The EPL is designed to impart public leadership skills and knowledge to high school seniors. Over the summer, participants spend a week at Furman where they investigate topics such as how to engage in the community, analyze critical issues, and practice ethical leadership. They also develop communication and presentation skills, and plan for the implementation of service projects, which address needs in their communities.

Bryant implemented a healthy lifestyle initiative at Skyland Elementary School for her EPL project.

She recorded local athletes who gave healthy tips. These public service announcements were broadcast on the school's morning news program. Bryant also started the Skyland Sprinters Club in which more than 60 students practice running once per week after school.

Bryant's project will culminate in the first annual Skyland Elementary Color Run April 30 where the entire school will take part in exercise and fitness. "With enough drive, passion, and motivation, I can use my leadership skills

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- APR 29 - Crepes Class

• Brianna Brunson, Scott's Branch High School. "Summerton Service Seniors "SSS"

Brunson recognized a need in her community to acknowledge and give back to the senior citizens who paved the way for the younger generation. She organized volunteers from her school to visit nursing homes, spend time with seniors during the holidays, collect and distribute personal hygiene items, and visit with hospitalized seniors.

• Emma Gross, St. Joseph's Catholic School, Greenville, "Project Hope".

Gross worked with the Greenville Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (GAIHN) to collect books, backpacks and school supplies for students in need. She also involved students in the National Honor Society at St. Joseph's to assist with packing and distributing the bags.

• Kaitlyn Sain, Clover High School. "Clover Smiles"

Recognizing dental health is directly related to general health, Sain provided dental hygiene products to lower income families. She collected dental hygiene items as part of the Pack the Back bags program at Bethany Elementary.

Sain led a dental hygiene drive in the fall at a home football game. More than 60 toothbrushes and other dental supplies were donated along with monetary contributions.

Honorable Mention

• Celine Crum, Mauldin High School. "The Mauldin Mural Project".

• Mira Carroll, Southside High School. "Sharing Our Stories "S.O.S".

Carroll documented the personal stories of the homeless population at Project Host Soup Kitchen. She helped prepare and cook meals, and spoke at length with the veterans, whose photos line the walls of the soup kitchen, to learn more about their life stories.

Apply here for the next class of Emerging Public Leaders. Applications are due May 3. Call the Riley Institute 864-294-3546 for more information.

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