

## The Riley Institute at Furman University's Emerging Public Leaders (EPL) Service Project Winners

On April 9, 2016, The Riley Institute at Furman University welcomed back its 2015-16 class of Emerging Public Leaders. Last summer, these students attended a week-long leadership program on Furman University's campus where they investigated topics such as engaging in the community, analyzing critical issues, practicing ethical leadership, developing communication and presentation skills, and planning for the implementation of a service project.

Following the summer and throughout the year, the students worked with Institute staff, school officials, and residents in their communities to plan and implement their own service project that reflects a need in their communities. The students returned on Saturday, April 9th to present their community service projects to a panel of judges, where the winning projects received funds for program expansion or replication.

EPL is free to all who participate thanks to its generous sponsors: State Farm, Cox Industries, the Riley Institute, General Electric, Walmart, and Spinx.

### **First Place Winners each receive \$1,000 to continue**

#### **Jeremiah Drummond – PAFT “Picture a Family Together”**

A student at Paul Dorman High School in Spartanburg, Jeremiah combined his passion for photography with his passion to give back to society. He spent two days using a corner of the dining room at the Spartanburg soup kitchen as a temporary studio and took holiday portraits for people who otherwise might not be able to buy a photo for the holidays. His story appeared in the following: *Savannah Morning News, Aiken Standard, Bluffton Today, SCNow, Washington Times, Deseret News, News 13, Daily Reporter, The Republic, Daily Journal, and The Greenville News.*

Quote from Jeremiah “The Emerging Public Leaders Program (EPL) has changed my life forever, 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 was 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.”

#### **Kehler Bryant – Healthy Tips for Happy Kids**

A student at Blue Ridge High School in Greer, Kehler implemented a healthy lifestyle initiative at Skyland Elementary School. She recorded public service announcements that play on the school's morning news program (SETV) of local athletes giving "healthy tips." She also started the Skyland Sprinters Club with over 60 students who practice running once a week after school. Her project will culminate in the first annual Skyland Elementary Color Run on April 30 where the entire school will take part in exercise and fitness.

Quote from Kehler: “With enough drive, passion, and motivation, I can use my leadership skills to achieve anything”.

### **Second Place Winners each receive \$600 to continue**

#### **Brianna Brunson – Summerton Service Seniors “SSS”**

A student at Scott's Branch High School in Summerton, Brianna 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 at Scott's Branch to visit nursing homes, spend time with seniors during the

holidays, collect personal hygiene items that lower income seniors need, and spend time with seniors who are in the hospital.

Quote from Brianna: "I really enjoyed doing this project because it was a good way to give back to the senior citizens who paved the way for children around the world to have an adequate education. I believe this project made me realize that I need to stop thinking about myself because they have done a lot for us and for the Summerton community."

#### **Emma Gross – Project Hope**

A student at St. Joseph's High School in Greenville, Emma 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 the bags and distributing them.

Quote from Emma: "EPL was completely worth it. It was very difficult, more than I could have ever imagined, but all of work was worth the reward."

#### **Kaitlyn Sain – Clover Smiles**

A student at Clover High School in Clover, Kaitlyn recognized that dental health is directly related to general health. She provided dental hygiene products to lower income families. She collected dental hygiene items to add to the Pack the Back bags at Bethany Elementary. She held a dental hygiene collection back in October on a Friday night at one of our home football games where over 60 tooth brushes and dental supplies were donated along with over 70 dollars.

Quote from Kaitlyn: "EPL was such a good experience for me. I grew as a person and loved watching my community help with my project."

#### **Honorable Mention**

##### **Celine Crum – The Mauldin Mural Project**

A student at Mauldin High School, on December 5, 2015, Celine, along with members of the National Arts Honors Society at the fine arts center and at Mauldin High, painted a mural on the outdoor wall of the Mauldin Cultural Center. Celine raised over \$200 on GoFundMe.com and has received national recognition for this project. Celine's project encourages youth to appreciate and get involved with the arts.

Quote from Celine: "Taking on the Mauldin Mural Project taught me so much about my style of leadership, built my overall self-confidence, and also gave me an opportunity to do something that I never dreamed of accomplishing at the age of 17. I hope that my message inspired others to dive into more artistic endeavors, and I also hope that I encouraged parents to foster creativity in their children. Creativity is a gift that can sadly fade if it is not nourished."

##### **Mira Carroll – Sharing Our Stories "S.O.S"**

A student at Southside High School, Mira documented the personal stories of the homeless population at Project Host. She helped prepare and cook the meals, then sat down with the veterans whose pictures were on the walls and spoke with them at length to learn more about their life stories. The stories may be features in "Unseen Greenville" by the Greenville News.

Quote from Mira: "Seeing the homeless community on the street is so different from sitting with them and having conversations about their hardships and struggles...When I spoke one-on-one with people who are currently going through that daily stress, I learned that positivity is the only way to continue on to the next day."