

The Riley Institute at Furman ®
Emerging Public Leaders
Spring Projects Presentations

Class of 2002

Katie Lee, First Place

*Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Katie did a one-on-one mentoring program with Spartanburg High School Students and students from Houston Elementary School, where Spartanburg High students went to the elementary school on Wednesday mornings to help the children with their homework and form relationships. This program, known as "Helping Hands Mentoring Program" is still going and actually has expanded to another elementary school in the same district.

Ann Stanton Cannarella

*Hartsville High School
Hartsville, SC*

Ann Stanton created "Leisure Alley": a small grassy community area turned into a park for the Boys and Girls Club of Hartsville, SC. The patch of grass was not maintained between the gym and learning center, making it the perfect place for a small "park." She, along with volunteers from her high school painted the park, as well as collected donations for landscaping picnic trees, and the play area.

Nikasha Dicks

*Williston-Elko High School
Williston, SC*

Nikasha organized "Klub K.O.O.L: Spirit Day 2002," an all day event designed to help younger youth in the community and provide them with role models. Klub K.O.O.L. (Kids Outreach, Operation Learn) participants included varsity football players, cheerleaders, and teachers who held a minature pep rally for the elementary school students and taught them about sportsmanship and dedication to working together as a team.

Monica Handa

*Riverside High School
Greer, SC*

Monica held a child mentoring program focused on getting children interested in reading. She went to a local daycare and read books to the children and reserved a special reading room at the library to read books to them. Monica also read to a first grade class at a local elementary school, which was the most successful part of her project.

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Dan Knott

*Dutch Fork High School
Irmo, SC*

Dan Knott used his AP Environmental Science class at Dutch Fork to explore the newly opened Saluda Shoals Park and generate environmental education in his community using the park. Dan and other classmates created a series of Field Guides about the park, designed for different interests and age levels. The guides highlight many resources of the park, as well as give historical and scientific information that will be useful for any visitors to the Park.

Taite Quinn

*Christ Church Episcopal School
Greenville, SC*

Taite worked with the City of Greenville government, in order to clean up the landscaping at the entrance of the Pleasant Valley Community area in Greenville, SC. With the approval of the City, Taite arranged to have students help with cleaning, planting, and maintaining the area, therefore promoting a positive appearance for the lower income neighborhood.

Claire Wilson

*Wade Hampton High School
Greenville, SC*

Clare focused on her school and community issue of racial diversity. Recognizing the large Hispanic population at Wade Hampton HS, Clare arranged to have students help her translate some of the PTA newsletters and community documents from the School Improvement Council from English into Spanish. Following these translations, she was also able to aide in the dispersal of this information throughout the school community.

Cindy Youssef

*Southside High School
Greenville, SC*

Cindy organized a mentoring program between the International Baccalaureate students at Southside High School and Sara Collins Elementary. The program, known as S.T.A.R.S. (Students Teaching and Reaching Students) had the high school students tutor at risk IB students at Sara Collins each week before classes began. In addition, students engaged in a cultural enrichment program, in which mentors accompanied students on cultural programs throughout Greenville. Such excursions included trips to the museum, Carolina First's Festival of Trees presentation in downtown Greenville, and storytelling presentations sponsored by the Greenville Symphony Orchestra.

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Class of 2003

Eileen Chiaro, First Place

*Hilton Head Preparatory School
Hilton Head Island, SC*

Eilieen created the group "Girl Talk," in which she recruited high school girls to work together with younger girls facing the critical middle school years to improve self-esteem, encourage independence and academic success and a healthy attitude and lifestyle.

Kristen Kennedy, Second Place

*Trinity Collegiate
Darlington, SC*

Kristen founded R.E.A.D. (Reading Encouragement and Development), who main objective was to encourage children's participation at the library. Kristen and students from her high school met with elementary students in Darlington County each week and read books to the children, as well as designing activities for the children to complete that coincided with the theme of the book.

Anna Ready, Second Place

*Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC*

Anna created "November's Newest," a voter registration drive at Emerald HS. She worked with other students to get more than 80% of her senior class registered to vote for the 2004 presidential election. Within the drive, Anna and other students showed registered voters how to register to vote, how to operate voting machines, and how to vote absentee.

Heather Beasley, Third Place

*Euclid High School
Euclid, OH*

Heather worked with students in her high school to create voter awareness through a "meet the candidates" campaign. In addition to registering students to vote, Heather held an evening event, in which she invited local candidates to meet students at the school and have students ask candidates questions prior to voting.

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Miguel Cavazos, Third Place

*Prepa Tec, Santa Catarina
Nuevo León, Mexico*

Miguel gathered students from his high school to mentor younger elementary and middle school students in a youth activity program. Along with helping students with schoolwork, Miguel's volunteers participated in several public events with the students and encouraged them to get involved in activities and leadership programs in their city.

Kirsten Coleman

*Southside High School
Greenville, SC*

Kirsten worked with students at Southside to create a recycling program for YMCA children to learn about the recycling process and how to practice those skills at home. Using the YMCA Judson Community Center, Kirsten held four classes for the students and had volunteers help her with many projects related to recycling.

Kasey Creswell

*Hillcrest High School
Simpsonville, SC*

Kasey's project objective was to make the students at her school, in South Carolina, and in the nation more aware of the importance of voting and participating in the democratic process. In addition to helping register voters for the election, Kasey spoke at several youth conventions and promoted the national young voters group, Freedom's Answer.

Susanna Ratsavong

*Garfield High School
Akron, OH*

Susanna donated the project money she received from EPL to Garfield HS and helped to fund a computer exchange/rental program for low income students who could not afford technology at home, which she set up with her English teacher.

Mary Utsey

*Hillcrest High School
Simpsonville, SC*

Mary completed an English as a Second Language program for Hispanic individuals in her community.

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Andrew Waters

*Christ Church Episcopal School
Greenville, SC*

Andy raised money for improvements to be made to the Patient Lounge at Shriner's Hospital, a facility of the Greenville Memorial Hospital. Andy and other students began a letter writing campaign for the improvements, which raised \$4,100 in donations.

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Class of 2004

Abby Elsener, First Place

*Anderson High School
Cincinnati, OH*

Abby created a project called "Girls Gone Real," a mentoring/leadership development program for high school girls. Along with volunteers from her high school, Abby traveled to a nearby middle school in Cincinnati and met with the girls on a weekly basis and taught them lessons on self-esteem, leadership skills, and provided the girls with mentors whom they admired and were able to confide in.

Achieng Adongo, Second Place

*Hammond High School
Columbia, SC*

Achieng's project was to develop a reading program for Somali Bantu refugee children. Achieng also worked with the students to help with homework and visited them each week.

Jeremy Welch, Third Place

*Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC*

Jeremy designed the South Main Street Community Soccer Clinic, a four part soccer clinic for area children who were interested in playing soccer but were unable to take part in all of the resources/practices required to play on a team. Using his high school soccer teammates and members from area high school soccer teams, Jeremy gathered students to the field and taught the children several drills and routines important for the game.

Will Alsfelder

*Mariemont High School
Cincinnati, OH*

Will's project addressed the needs of the military forces fighting in Iraq. With the help of area community members, Will collected much needed items for those soldiers fighting in Iraq, including clothing, blankets, games, and several toiletry items.

Justin Bagwell

*Hillcrest High School
Simpsonville, SC*

Justin organized a benefit drive for the Generations Group Home in Simpsonville and collected sporting goods for the boys to play with. In addition, he used volunteers to play with the young boys each week.

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William Baucom

*Mayo High School
Darlington, SC*

William worked with students from his high school to beautify an area of Mayo High's campus which faced an underprivileged nearby community. He was able to work with other students to clear the land and provide a more positive landscape that community members could enjoy.

John O'Dell Ferguson

*Mauldin High School
Mauldin, SC*

John worked with the Phyllis Wheatley Center in Greenville to hold a leadership day for students in the community.

Davis Mersereau

*Porter-Gaud
Charleston, SC*

Moving his focus to an international scale, Davis decided to focus his project around the tsumani that took place in South East Asia. Using students from his high school, Davis organized a benefit concert called "WaveSave" for the victims in South East Asia.

Chase Neely

*Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Chase worked with students to provide a ministry to a Mountain View Nursing Home. They provided one event a week for the residents using several different churches in the area.

Kristin Olson

*Terry Sanford High School
Fayetteville, NC*

Kristin's project was to collect prom dresses for young girls who desired to go to the prom but did not have the adequate funding to afford dresses. In addition to collecting the dresses, Kristin also hosted sessions on self-esteem and professionalism for the young girls.

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Class of 2005

Patrick Sellars, First Place

*Dorman High School
Roebuck, SC*

Patrick's project created a children's book and matching coloring books that focused on teaching conservation to elementary school children. He incorporated unique factors, such as the mascots of each elementary school in the district as well as teachers from each school, and worked on distributing these books to each individual school in the district.

Omi Naderi, Second Place

*Charleston County School of the Arts
North Charleston, SC*

Omi partnered with the Charleston School of the Arts to create a weekly after-school arts program for a Charleston middle school that did not offer an arts program to its students.

Shun Griffin, Second Place

*Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC*

Shun's vision for a program involved mentoring students and designing a project to teach students about leadership. "Operation Impact," formed by Shun and other Emerald HS students, took middle school students for Saturday meetings, in which they taught the eighth graders leadership skills, methods for handling difficult situations, and ways to deal with peer pressure.

Ellen Corman, Third Place

*Escambia Academy-Alabama
Atmore, AL*

Ellen worked to secure a \$75,000 grant from the US Department of Agriculture to replace trees destroyed by Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis in her hometown of Atmore, Alabama. Ellen made these trees available to the community through an "Adopt a Tree" campaign, to raise awareness that trees were being planted in the area.

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Will Lankford, Honorable Mention

*York Comprehensive High School
York, SC*

Will used the York Place Episcopal Church Home for Children to work with its children in his program “Cougar Connection.” Throughout his senior year, Will and members of various school groups at York Comprehensive HS traveled to the home and held several gatherings between the home’s children and the volunteers. Will’s aim was to link the students at the home with high school students, by holding several beautification projects and holiday parties.

Jane Werrell, Honorable Mention

*Ashley Hall High School
Charleston, SC*

Jane organized the efforts of her classmates and together they worked through Habitat for Humanity to build a playground for children in a local Habitat neighborhood.

Martha Bordogna

*Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Martha organized a volunteer drive for the Spartanburg Children Shelter in Spartanburg, SC. The shelter houses children from the time they are taken from their unfit homes until they are placed in foster homes.

Jonathan Cote

*Fort Mill High School
Fort Mill, SC*

Jonathan established a student liaison board that would attend School board meetings for his district and present news and events taking place at Fort Mill HS. Jonathan’s aim was to provide the School board with input from students, as well as giving the students to report to their student body with events and decisions made during these meetings. The School Board unanimously voted to accept this student board.

Brandy Durham

*Northwestern High School
Rock Hill, SC*

Brandy organized a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Fair for the city of Rock Hill and surrounding communities. The all day event incorporated speaker presentations, question and answer sessions, fun and food for all ages.

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Olivia Hightower

*Midland Valley High School
Graniteville, SC*

Olivia formed a Global Awareness Group at Midland Valley which focused on answering the question "Have you changed the world today?" Her project entailed getting students together to discuss several issues that have been in the news and that have a global focus, including the Darfur region, natural disasters, and political issues.

Quentin James

*Mauldin High School
Mauldin, SC*

Quentin worked with several members of the South Carolina Youth in Government (YIG) group to create a program called "Get Involved." Quentin's goal was to provide central, easy, accessible/informative virtual community maps to area youth. These maps recognized services and organizations that promote youth involvement in the community. Together with YIG and many student groups, Quentin was able to get these booklets made and aide in their distribution around the community.

Niti Parthasarathy

*South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts
Greenville, SC*

Niti created the "Rockstars" mentoring program, in which she and many high school classmates worked with the Earle Street Baptist Church afterschool program for students from Stone Academy. Niti's focus was to provide these elementary school students with role models and mentors in the community. She also helped out with a Martin Luther King, Jr. presentation at her school, and invited participants to take part in the "Rockstars" mentoring program following the MLK presentation.

Elizabeth Powell

*Carvers Bay High School
Hemingway, SC*

Elizabeth organized an awareness walk for Diabetes walk for the Diabetes CORE Program in Georgetown, SC. She used some students from my community and one or two from her high school to help out. Elizabeth worked with an organization that was already established called Diabetes CORE.

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Jennifer Rahn

*Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School
Bamberg, SC*

Jennifer founded Project HOPE (Helping Others by Providing Enjoyment), a community service organization that basically provided recreational areas/activities to disadvantaged individuals in her community (ie. nursing home residents, special ed students.) Some of the projects completed were creating a huge garden and sitting area at the local nursing home, creating an educational planting garden for the special ed students at the local primary school, organizing bingo/reading/relaxation events at the nursing home, and beautifying the grounds of the local high school and middle school.

Emily Wilson

*Hartsville High School
Hartsville, SC*

Emily worked with middle school students (most in the sixth grade) who expressed an interest in leadership and career opportunities. Through the help of several community members, Emily brought many professionals to speak to a group of students from a Hartsville middle school. Each presenter spoke about his/her profession and leadership qualities necessary for the career.

Adrian Zoller

*Gilmour Academy
Gates Mills, OH*

Adrian used the election year as a means of educating the community on several science topics that were in the news. She gave several presentations on topics such as stem cell research, as well as encouraging many youth to register to vote and learning more about the important election issues.

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Class of 2006

Hakeem Jefferson, First Place

*Crestwood High School
Gable, SC*

Hakeem developed Maximizing Our Potential (MOP), an after-school mentoring program at Mayewood Middle School, designed to provide a series of thought-provoking discussions and hands-on activities addressing issues which Hakeem deems essential to success. This mentoring group aims to lower the number of student suspensions, referrals, and expulsions at the middle school.

Lorna Fink, First Place

*East Forsyth High School
Kernersville, SC*

Lorna created "No Bull! Be Noble!," an anti-bullying coalition and worked with her school system to implement a no-tolerance policy towards bullying. She invited Tony Bartoli, a speaker against bullying from Orlando, FL, to be the guest speaker at her first event, an anti-bullying rally at her high school, which both high school and middle school students attended.

Stephanie Matson, Second Place

*Thomas Worthington High School
Worthington, OH*

Stephanie created Kids Pro-Health, an organization which educated fourth graders at the local elementary school about healthy lifestyles. Her project involved a series of five classes held at the elementary school to educate students about healthy food, healthy living and exercise.

Sarah Meadows, Second Place

*Barnwell High School
Blackville, SC*

Sarah's project, Eating for the Hungry, raised \$5400 and encompassed a two-fold project vision. She first facilitated a coin war between local high schools to raise money to stock an area food pantry. Sarah also work with town leaders to host a benefit banquet, involving a formal dinner, which raised substantial funds to be donated to three local organizations that provide food to those who are hungry.

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Cotrel Brooks, Honorable Mention

*Lake Marion High School
Santee, SC*

Cotrel partnered with local organizations to host a health fair at his high school in order to enlighten his peers about the health risks that affect both young adults. He brought representatives from the region to speak with students about healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, diseases, and emotional disorders, among other topics. Approximately 1,000 students attended the event.

Danielle Brandon, Honorable Mention

*Mid-Carolina High School
Newberry, SC*

Danielle focused on promoting literacy among elementary students in order to prevent high school drop-outs. She held a book drive at her school to collect books for the local elementary school and, in May, will ask the elementary students to sign a contract saying "I promise to read five books this summer."

Utsav Bansal

*Brighton High School
Rochester, NY*

Utsav created "iVY: Initiatives for Vigilant Youth," an organization designed to better involve suburban youth in community initiatives and to help connect urban and suburban youth in the Rochester area. Through his partnership with Youth Voice, One Vision Council, Utsav is working to create iVY communities in every high school and to sponsor events, such as the All City Fashion Show and the building of a Habitat home.

Sean Bear

*Pinewood Preparatory School
Summerville, SC*

Sean's program, Youth Encouraging Suffrage (YES), was created to educate the citizens of Dorchester and Charleston counties about voter registration, the voting process, and the political arena. To date his project has registered over 500 voters.

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Rachael Bedosky

*Bluffton High School
Bluffton, SC*

Rachael's program, "Seniors Sign to Vote!," aimed to register eligible voters in her hometown of Bluffton. She worked with the League of Women Voters, Chamber of Commerce, and Representative Bill Herbkersman to achieve her goal. Rachael distributed flyers and voter registration forms throughout her community and worked with Representative Herbkersman to introduce a resolution to the state legislature to create an official statewide "Seniors Sign to Vote" Day.

James Beja

*Strom Thurmond High School
Johnston, SC*

James started a mentoring program at his high school in hopes of lowering the high school dropout rate in his community. He employed the help of his school's NJROTC Academic Team in order to create the program's team of mentors.

Ali Boyd

*Hammond School
Columbia, SC*

Ali Boyd created a reading program for Somali-Bantu children. This program raised money to donate books to these children and also organized groups of high school students to come and read to the children.

T.J. Brown

*Lexington High School
Lexington, SC*

With the help of an established musical group at his high school known as The Dog Patch Sympathy, TJ coordinated concerts at local retirement and assisted living homes in order to bring music and entertainment to residents. Through additional community concerts, TJ also worked to encourage youth to join orchestra groups.

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Anna Dearybury
Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg, SC

Through her project, "Write On Track," Anna established an after-school writing workshop where students could discuss reading assignments, receive help with editing and writing essays, and enjoy the benefits of mentoring. The workshops targeted at-risk students and took place xxx. Participants were mentored by volunteers from the Spartanburg High School Literary Club, along with other student volunteers.

Sarah Delap
Riverside High School
Riverside, SC

For her project, "Reach Out, Make a Difference, Volunteer!," Sarah developed a brochure and PowerPoint listing local organizations in need of volunteers in order to give teenagers an overview of opportunities available to them in the community. Copies of the brochure and PowerPoint were made available to local youth groups, high schools, and other youth organizations.

Brann Fowler
Thomas Heyward Academy
Ridgeland, SC

Brann worked with his high school's student government to develop Resolution Run, a locally-held 5K run and two-mile walk in January. Participants ranged widely in age and ability, and proceeds from the race went to the Jasper County Boys and Girls Club.

Shana Roach
Fairfield Central High School
Ridgeway, SC

Shana's project, Helping Hands, aimed to improve the quality of life for families staying at the local Ronald McDonald House. Volunteers from her JROTC Battalion, other student organizations, and area churches assisted in the effort. Among the donations that Helping Hands were able to provide for the Ronald McDonald House were two McMeals and "I Care Kits."

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Lindsay Wallace

*Mauldin High School
Simpsonville, SC*

Lindsey's project, Rescuing Unloved Furry Friends (RUFF), created an organization at her high school focused on improving the condition of the lives of animals in the community. Student volunteers raised thousands of dollars for the cause and donated time to local shelters, spay and neuter clinics, and fundraisers. The group also raised local awareness about issues related to animal welfare.

Denyse Walls

*Beacon School
New York, NY*

The Healium Inc. Poetry Project, Denyse's project, designed poetry workshops for at-risk students in New York City. She worked with an established organization, The Healium Inc, to provide youth with a forum for presenting poetry, in New York City schools, libraries, and other similar locations and to run teacher workshops in schools and universities.

Becca Wilson

*Upper Arlington High School
Columbus, OH*

Becca's project created "Shoe Angels," a program designed to facilitate the donation of lightly-used athletic shoes to her community's homeless population. She also created a website that shows individuals how to start a Shoe Angels program in their own communities.

Melissa Youssef

*Southside High School
Greenville, SC*

Melissa worked with her school's student council to establish the Tiffany Kager Green Foundation, whose aim is to raise awareness about lung cancer and give those who are diagnosed with the disease a chance to fight the illness. She involved local businesses and health professionals in her effort to share information about lung cancer in the Greenville area, and she also organized a race in the foundation's name.

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Class of 2007

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.

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 H2NO 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.

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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!

Luis Gonzales

*Greenville Senior 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.

Jay Ingles

*Eastside High School
Taylors, 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.

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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.

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.

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.

Anh 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.

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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.

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.

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

*James F. Byrnes High School
Duncan, 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

*Parlorview High School
Lilburn, 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

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Education class to collect cans as a fundraiser, and teaching recycling lessons at a local elementary school.

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Jon Baddley

*Mauldin High School
Mauldin, SC*

Project: "Team One" – Jon combined the problems of child obesity with the lack of activity and productivity from our nations foster care children. His project used a sports camp to get the foster care children of his community involved in physical activity to improve their health and self-esteem while simultaneously providing a respite for their foster parents. The added attention from Team One as well as the physical activity had immeasurable positive effects on the foster children who participated in the activities.

Michael Bibo

*Fort Mill High School
Fort Mill, SC*

Project: "The Flyers Green" – Michael wanted to raise awareness of how poor our environment is and start changing that trend with today's youth. Through environmentally friendly activities and events that his project is sponsoring, Michael is teaching the leaders of tomorrow the need for conservation and environmental respect.

Mallory Boyd

*Hammond School
Columbia, SC*

Project: "R.E.A.C.H" – Mallory wanted to help the homeless children of Columbia by providing for them a project that would build their self-esteem and combat the problems associated with a homeless lifestyle. By partnering with The Children's Garden Mallory served homeless children under the age of 5 by providing affection and attention through crafts and book reading to positively affect the children and their outlook on themselves.

Brittany Donnelly

*Spring Valley High School
Columbia, SC*

Project: "Bowling for Success" - Brittany put on a bowling fundraiser to raise money for purchasing business suits and other personal supplies for the women of the Killingsworth Home that assists them with job interviews and overall confidence.

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Landy Fink

*East Forsyth High School
Kernersville, NC*

Project: "P.E.A.C.E" – Landy wanted to combat the rising violence her community, specifically in the halls of her high school. Through her project, Landy was able to plant a hand crafted monument dedicated to peace in her community that would serve as a reminder to everyone about the importance of peace. A subsequent peace pole will be planted in her town's sister city in the country of Japan.

Tori James

*Forestview High School
Gastonia, NC*

Project: "Girls Helping Girls" – Tori's project identified the need for positive female role models for the young women of her community. Knowing that girls entering high school are at their most impressionable stages, Tori provided positive role models for the girls in a safe environment to discuss problems and put them on a path to success

Zacharias Kennedy

*Fairfield Central High School
Winnsboro, SC*

Project: "Knowledge For Life" – Zacharias wanted to help his classmates and their families with the economic burden of applying to colleges. His project helped identify what scholarships were, where students could apply for them and what credit means to a future college student. He was able to empower a large number of his classmates think about education after high school now that financial restrictions were not such a problem.

Amber Locklear

*Pinewood Preparatory School
Summerville, SC*

Project: "Lauerne C. Williams Library" – Amber wanted to provide her town with an essential service that was lacking, a library. Through subsequent book drives and donations, Amber was able to, and is still collecting, books for her newly established library. Now her small town has the opportunity to conveniently expand their knowledge through books which provides for the betterment of the youth and the community as a whole.

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Stephen Miller

*James Island Christian School
Charleston, SC*

Project: "Students Serving Seniors" – Stephen wanted to serve his community through active involvement with the senior citizens. His project was designed to regularly serve 9 senior citizens of his community everyday. Stephen was not only able to help the seniors of his community; he was also able to simultaneously increase community service among students of his high school.

Tierney O'Rourke

*Jesuit High School
Portland, OR*

Project: "Unidos en el Saber" – Tierney's project was aimed at the migrant worker communities of the surrounding Portland region. Her project was aimed at providing basic school necessities as well as free tutoring services to the migrant families of Camp Azul. She hoped to create better opportunities and a brighter future for the children of Camp Azul as they struggled to receive even the most basic education with their migrant lifestyles.

Neha Parthasarathy

*S.C. Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities
Greenville, SC*

Project: "Speak Your Mind" – Neha addressed the problem of public speaking in today's youth. Through her experiences in debate and applying for colleges, she saw how important it was to be able to confidently speak to strangers and large crowds. Her project was a series of speaking seminars and conferences that helped those who participated in overcoming their anxiety of public speaking and enabling them to address others with confidence.

Sean Robins

*Strom Thurmond High School
Johnston, SC*

Project: "The Extra Things" – Sean designed his project to help save the extracurricular activities program at his school. Recent budget cuts would have done away with many of the activities that students enjoy outside of the classroom, but Sean's project raised money to keep these activities in the budget through an all day carnival.

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Ben Saul

*Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC*

Project: "Help Us Create A Greener Greenwood" – Ben wanted to raise awareness in school for the crucial need to recycle. His project was designed to provide his high school with recycling receptacles and also engage the surrounding community by encouraging them to recycle as well. Through his efforts Ben was able to set up a system that will be permanently applied at his school and also raise awareness about the importance of recycling.

Benton Wise

*West Florence High School
Florence, SC*

Project: "Opening the Doors to Better Education" – Benton put together an awareness conference to bring to light the problems of South Carolina public education, specifically along the corridor of shame. He based his project off the recent Bud Ferillo documentary "Corridor of Shame: The Neglect of South Carolina's Rural Schools," and he helped in getting over 40,000 names on a petition to force the government of South Carolina to recognize the problem in SC public schools and do something to change it.

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Class of 2009

Farrah Bui

*Fort Mill High School
Fort Mill, SC*

Project: "Notes of Hope: Saving Our Youth Note by Note"- Farrah used music to motivate and inspire underprivileged and/or at-risk children to succeed and find a positive outlet by providing them with musical supplies including instruments and instructors.

Graham Bichell

*Greenville High School
Greenville, SC*

Project: ""Keeping the Change"- Graham wanted the good feelings and positivity established at Greenville High School's Challenge Day to remain long after the event's conclusion. Together with a team of like-minded students, Graham has organized a pizza dinner, created a Change Committee and designed t-shirts aimed at rekindling the enthusiasm from the original event.

Kayley Seawright

*Westside High School
Anderson, SC*

Project: "Leos to Lions"- In the hope of encouraging and increasing volunteerism at her high school, Kayley created a student-led community service club where any student could join and participate in various service activities around the Anderson community. Because the Leo Club is sponsored by the Lions Club, there is no cost to join and students are given the option to become part of that organization upon graduation.

Alex Watford

*Orangeburg Preparatory School
Orangeburg, SC*

Project: "Orangeburg County Youth Council"- Alex's project was designed to target youth leadership in order to educate them about conditions in his hometown of Orangeburg. By developing student leaders, he hopes that parents, peers and adult leadership will take notice and make necessary changes to the community in hopes of increasing the economic appeal of Orangeburg to the surrounding communities.

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Anthony Traina

*Roncalli High School
Indianapolis, IN*

Project: "Christmas Store Book Collection":- Anthony wanted to increase awareness of poverty in the community by organizing a book drive during the Christmas season to benefit needy families in downtown Indianapolis. In addition to brightening up a few Christmas mornings, Anthony wanted to ensure that his gift of these books would promote reading and create good educational habits.

Hakeem Bennett

*Scott's Branch High School
Summerton, SC*

Project: "US: Unite Summerton"- Hakeem's project focused on bringing students from his town's two high schools together for fun and fellowship in a way that would benefit their community. Together, the students from Scott's Branch High School and Clarendon Hall High School joined together to beautify the local park; together with City Year, this diverse group of students worked together to re-paint aging playground equipment, baseball courts.

Julianne Welch

*Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC*

Project: "Los Amigos"- Julianne worked with students from her high school to provide positive role models for the high school and middle school students at La Puerta, a non-profit organization that offers free English classes to inhabitants of Greenwood's predominantly Hispanic area. By establishing relationships between two different ethnic groups, she impacted the language barrier of the two communities and assisted in giving interested students reinforcement in setting positive long-term goals.

Alexandra Nazeree

*Riverside High School
Greer, SC*

Project: "Closing the Divide: Global Awareness Pen Pal Program"- Alexandra wanted to use her project to increase global awareness through communications between different people. To help facilitate this, she started a pen pal program between the students in her high school and elementary and middle school students in the Kabul Province in Afghanistan.

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Akshay Kumar

Southside High School

Greenville, SC

Project: "Upperclassmentors"- Akshay saw his high school's low graduation rate, as well as the functional segregation of IB and non-IB students and wanted to create a program to initiate change and enhance the high school experience. To do so, he paired academically at-risk freshmen by pairing them with older student mentors, where they organized and executed a mentoring scheduled along with several service learning projects outside of school.

Soorya Avali

Spring Valley High School

Columbia, SC

Project: "One Step Closer"- Soorya wanted to help underperforming middle school students in his area continue their journey to graduation by providing them with mentoring and tutoring support from honors-level high school students. To do this, he used the Boys and Girls Club Center in a local middle school as the interface mechanism and recruited honors students from his own high school to serve as tutors.

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Class of 2010

Kenan Sakarcan, 1st place

*Spring Valley High School
Columbia, SC*

Kenan started “Got Warmth?” a service project to collect quality used and new sleeping bags to protect his area’s homeless from exposure. Kenan worked with a diverse spectrum of community members to collect 234 sleeping bags that he personally distributed to Columbia’s homeless.

Emily Cinquemani, 2nd place

*St. Joseph’s High School
Greenville, SC*

Emily created “Readers Rock!” a service project to motivate elementary school students to value and enjoy reading by increasing the availability of reading materials to underprivileged children. Emily worked with publishing companies to secure book donations and then distributed them to need-based organizations around her area.

Hannah Keefer, 3rd place

*Pinewood Preparatory School
Summerville, SC*

Hannah created an International Club at her school. The club’s purpose is to support and plan activities for international students from around the world that attend her school as part of a study-away program. The activities occur quarterly and have included beach trips and dinners downtown.

Stephanny Jimenez, Honorable Mention

*Greenville High School
Greenville, SC*

Stephanny wanted to decrease the amount of environmental waste by starting a student-led composting system at her high school. Stephanny installed a small composting system on school grounds that contained yard debris collected by student volunteers.

Other EPL Participants:

Amit Bilgi

*Southside High School
Greenville, SC*

Amit led an environmental awareness initiative within his community. He put together kits filled with various pamphlets and sustainable items, such as “green” light bulbs and trash bags and distributed them to various community

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organizations like churches and after-school programs. He hopes to expand his project by holding an environmental awareness conference in 2012.

Sarah Katherine DeVenny

Lancaster High School

Lancaster, SC

Sarah Katherine decided to address her area's poor literacy rate and low test scores by partnering with numerous community organizations to encourage young children and their parents to read. She organized a "Family Read-in Night" at an early childhood center. The event included a special presentation by a local library representative followed by the opportunity for each child to choose a book to take home.

Max Kayton

St. James High School

Myrtle Beach, SC

Noticing that individuals ages 18 to 29 were the least enthusiastic group of registered voters, Max decided to raise awareness about political issues and encourage more people from his generation to get out and vote. Max did this by creating a publicity video about registering to vote and distributed pre-stamped envelopes for voter registration forms to his fellow students.

Benjamin Ramsey

Riverside High School

Greer, SC

While volunteering at a soup kitchen, Ben began to think about bicycles as being the sole means of transportation for many of his area's homeless population and their need for bike repair and locks. For his service project he worked with a local bike repair shop to offer free repair as needed and has contacted other community organizations to donate racks and locks to be installed outside of local need-based organizations.

Sanjana Rao

Jesuit High School

Portland, OR

For her service project, Sanjana worked with the Portland After School Tennis and Education, a program that offers year-round one-on-one tutoring for students as well as free tennis instruction. Sanjana recruited high school and adult volunteers to assist with the program, promoted the organization at major tennis events and within the Indian community and raised over \$500 by fundraising.

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Trenton Smith

*North Myrtle Beach High School
Myrtle Beach, SC*

Aware that abundant public access and high tourism rates were affecting the quality of his area's beaches, Trenton partnered with his school's Biology Club and the town's administration to organize a "beach sweep", a one-day event where he and his peers cleaned up a designated beach access and the surrounding area. Trenton plans to work with the Adopt-a-Landing program to provide long-term care and upkeep.

Ryan Stevens

*Belton-Honea Path High School
Belton, SC*

Ryan worked with his school's student council to donate desserts to be served at a local homeless shelter's annual Thanksgiving meal. He worked with the student council and school administrators to facilitate a field trip for volunteers to present the donations personally.

Joni Ware

*Broome High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Noticing a high rate of teen pregnancy and STIs at her high school, Joni decided to center her service project on abstinence-awareness. She worked with her school's student government and administration to organize a speaker program encouraging young men and women to remain abstinent.

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Class of 2011

Katie Ryan, 1st place (tied)

*Bluffton High School
Bluffton, SC*

Katie started a mentoring program called “Whatever It Takes” hoping to give high school students the opportunity to serve the community, help elementary school students learn, and give the elementary school students a proper and consistent role model.

Taylor Gardiner, 1st place (tied)

*Broome High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Taylor implemented a reading mentor partnership between his high school and all Spartanburg District 3 elementary schools in the hopes of influencing children to have a more productive life geared more toward athletics and focusing on academics. “Centurion Mentors” had close to 40 students fill 70 mentor roles; approximately 1360 students were read to by student-athletes from Broome High School.

Aryana Derakhshan, 2nd place

*Wilson High School
Wilson, SC*

Hoping to raise awareness of the impact of hunger in her community, Aryana instituted a “Peanut Butter and Jelly Drive” at her school to benefit the Harvest Hope Food Bank and Five Loaves Ministry. She exceeded her goals by collecting over 6,073 nonperishable food items, weighing over 7,000 pounds.

Austin Ambrose, 3rd place

*Aynor High School
Aynor, SC*

Austin project created an effective and lasting recycling program at his school. His project “Horry County Recycles” educated young people about the importance of recycling and environmental sustainability. Austin created awareness on various social media sites and even educated several local businesses on potential ways to encourage recycling.

Krystle Ballatore, Honorable Mention

*St. James High School
Myrtle Beach, SC*

Krystle’s project “Got Clean Hands?” endeavored to educate restaurants in her community about ways to prevent the spread of germs. Krystle met with several

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restaurants in her community and encouraged them to place hand sanitizers in strategic locations within their restaurants.

Other EPL Participants:

Hollis Carrouth

*Cardinal Newman High School
Columbia, SC*

Hollis worked with community leaders to create a packet on gardening and eco-friendly behavior to be presented at a local middle school's Earth Day fair.

Nina Contis

*Christ Church Episcopal School
Greenville, SC*

Nina created a nonprofit organization called "Teens for Tomorrow" to collect money for Greenville County Schools. She worked with a local artist to create a calendar containing public and private school holidays and football schedules. Through the calendar sales, private donations, and a fundraising event, Nina raised over \$4,000 for the school district.

Ana Gibson

*Riverside High School
Greer, SC*

Ana's project, "IDK: Turing 'I Don't Know!' into Inspiration, Knowledge, Dedication," addressed the issue of youth education, awareness, and participation in volunteer organizations and community service projects in the Greenville area. She held an informational "fair" in the hope of establishing, at an early age, not only an awareness of local charities and the services they provide, but also a life-long commitment to community service.

Xzavier Killings

*Dorman High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Xzavier established a program to help minority and under-represented students get free instruction and preparation for standardized tests such as the SAT. Xzavier solicited support from the community and his school to create his program, "Palmetto STEP (Scholastic Testing and Education Preparation).

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Class of 2012

Olivia Baddley, First Place

*Mauldin High School
Simpsonville, SC*

Olivia started a program called “Beyond the Mountaintop,” a camp specifically for foster children, in an effort to build their self-esteem and expose them to an active lifestyle outdoors. Olivia implemented her program for foster children and their foster parents in November 2012, providing opportunities for the children to get outdoors as well as educational sessions for the parents. Olivia was named the top high school youth volunteer in South Carolina for her project and hopes to implement her program in other areas in the future.

Nandita Karambelkar, Second Place

*SC Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities
Goose Creek, SC*

Nandita had a desire to inculcate a love of reading in children in her community and established the “Bright Smiles Reading Program” to achieve this goal. She collected donations of books and set up book centers for children in several communities while also coordinating volunteers to read with children in the Greenville and Charleston communities. Nandita also expanded her program to students at Sanwad School in Lonavala, India.

Ellie Fowler, Third Place

*Marlboro Academy
Bennettsville, SC*

Ellie coordinated a program, “Love a Pet,” for high school volunteers to spend their time assisting local animal shelters. She also held a supply drive with her Interact Club to take donations for the animal shelters. Ellie and her team of volunteers contributed 68 service hours to these shelters in the 5 months of her program.

Joey Baldwin

*North Augusta High School
North Augusta, SC*

With an interest in preserving the history of his town, Joey worked with the Arts and Heritage Center of North Augusta on the “North Augusta Legacy Project” to educate students about film techniques that would then be applied to interviews of citizens in the community. Joey facilitated a film seminar for students and was able to record oral histories of 11 citizens, and he hopes to continue training students and completing interviews to contribute to his project.

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Karthik Chandrasekar

*Southside High School
Simpsonville, SC*

Karthik worked with the organization “Generous Gardens,” an organization that seeks to fight hunger in South Carolina by providing locally grown produce to charities. Karthik is currently working with Generous Gardens to raise awareness for the project and he has plans to hold an event that will contribute to publicity for the project and for the issue of hunger in South Carolina.

Alex Garland

*Aynor High School Scholars Academy
Galivants Ferry, SC*

Alex saw that a number of students in his high school were struggling with their normal coursework, and saw an opportunity to provide after-school tutoring by working with his fellow students and his school’s chapter of the National Honors Society. Alex worked with both students and teachers to provide assistance to students at least once a week for some of the most difficult courses at his high school.

Ken Krupa

*Hammond High School
Elgin, SC*

Ken started a club at his school, “Ken’s Club for Kids,” and partnered with the Columbia City Kids Marathon to raise awareness about childhood obesity in his high school and community. Along with other volunteers from his school, Ken assisted with the marathon and also taught participants about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and provided them with educational materials.

Punam Mulji

*Dorman High School
Spartanburg, SC*

Punam’s project, the District Six Tutoring Enrichment Program, aimed to provide out-of-class tutoring opportunities to students in local elementary schools. She was able to work with a team of high school volunteers to provide after-school tutoring to these students, and she has passed the program down to a new team of leaders to be continued after her graduation.

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Class of 2014

Jo Baslot

*Wilson High School
Florence, SC*

Jo created a Science Fair entitled “Science Around the World” for students at Florence District One. Students learned about various science projects and countries. Projects were led by fellow students

Nikhalia Cheepurupalli

*Spring Valley High School
Columbia, SC*

Nikhalia created a program called Infinity and Beyond at Spring Valley High School. She involved various high school math groups to tutor Dent Middle School students. The focus was to help students who struggle in math and do not have the solid math foundation needed to perform complex problems.

Natrone Davis

*Scott's Branch High School
Summerton, SC*

Natrone created a mentoring program called “Saving Eaglets” for males in 3rd - 5th grade. The program matched elementary school aged children with a male between the ages of 16-21 who served as a positive influence on the child. The program fostered community involvement by having local leaders and ministers involved. Students who participated in the program were rewarded with a week-long basketball camp led by Natrone and his fellow high school teammates.

Luke De Mott

*Mauldin High School
Greenville, SC*

To help poverty stricken children in Greenville, Luke created a mentorship/tutoring program that would show low income Elementary school aged children “the value of a good education” and how it can help them accomplish their goals. This mentorship program encouraged high school students to visit elementary schools once a week to encourage students to do well in school and assist them with reading. Donations from community members were collected in order to provide prizes for those students who participated and showed progress.

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Mary Beth Grant

Greenwood High School
Greenwood, SC

Mary Beth wanted to address the issue of literacy in Greenwood. She is organized a book drive called “Reading Round-up” at her high school and local churches and distributed these books to the United Way of Greenwood, Healthy Learners, Bowers Rodgers, The Children’s Center, and Laurens Safe Home. The project collected over 500 books total.

Westin Hardesty

Travelers Rest High School
Travelers Rest, SC

Westin created a program called “Puppet Outreach Program” that assisted children at the Frazee Dream Center to make their own puppets. These puppets were then used to act out difficult scenarios in these childrens’ lives.

Brittany Joyce

Hartsville High School
Hartsville, SC

Selected officers within the City of Hartsville Police Department distributed gift certificates of less than \$5.00 in value to students in Thornwell Elementary, Hartsville Middle, and Hartsville High School when they “catch” a student doing a good deed or making a good decision. Local businesses who donated were McDonald’s, Markette, Sonic, Wendy’s, Subway, and members of St. Luke UMC. This program is a collaboration between the City of Hartsville, the Hartsville Police Department, the Community Foundation for a Better Hartsville, local businesses, and residents. The goal of the program is that, as police recognize good behavior and distribute the certificates, they begin to build positive and strong relationships with the children and teens in the community and encourage them to make good decisions. For more information or to make a donation, please contact the Community Foundation for a Better Hartsville.

Mani King

St. Joseph’s High School
Greenville, SC

Mani wanted to raise awareness of the problem of drug abuse in Greenville. To do so, her program created social media pages to advertise the issue and make it well known. Student mentors from high school were assigned to middle school students to discuss the dangers of drugs and peer pressure.

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Kenny Nguyen

*Greenwood Christian
Greenwood, SC*

Kenny believed that the promotion of education in Greenwood is essential to the community's continuing growth. He created "Stellar Kids: Start Young, Start Smart, Start Here" a mentor program in which high school students tutored and assisted elementary students twice a month. At the end of the program, an evaluation was sent to the students' parents to inform them of their child's progress.

Lucas Paquette

*Johnsonville High School
Johnsonville, SC*

The program's objective was to entertain senior citizens in Johnsonville and show them that their community cares about them. The closest form of entertainment for senior citizens in Johnsonville is over an hour away and most senior citizens do not participate due to the distance. The Senior Prom has given the senior citizens and the students in the Johnsonville community a chance to enjoy entertainment and to involve high school students in service projects close to home. On April 4, 2015, with assistance from local businesses, Johnsonville will hold its first Senior Prom at the Periwinkle Pavilion. Johnsonville High School and Prosser Law Firm have graciously provided the venue and decorations. Additional sponsors include Industrial Contractors, CMA Clearing and Excavating, The Tackle Box, Scotts' BBQ, Anderson Brothers Bank, Haselden Brothers, and Piggly Wiggly. The Florence County Senior Citizen's Association has provided the invitations and postage. At press time, 62 senior citizens plan to attend.

Susannah Pazdan

*Christ Church Episcopal School
Greenville, SC*

Susannah addressed the problem of homelessness in Greenville by creating a student photography show. The profits from the show supported the Triune Mercy Center in Greenville.

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Tre' Dessa Smalls

Hartsville High School

Myrtle Beach, SC

3Es is a project geared toward middle school aged African American girls to teach them about self-worth and to let them know that they are more than a statistic. The project was led by Smalls and fellow high school females and featured speakers who were high ranking African American female leaders from Horry and surrounding counties. Topics included goal setting; light skin vs. dark skin debate; mind, body and soul; protecting yourself; being black in America; my right as a woman; our generation: babies having babies; and peer pressure. Local businesses and organizations who supported this program include the Burgess Community Center. Plans are underway to host a 3E summer camp at the Burgess community center in 2015, please contact Smalls at tredessasmalls@gmail.com for more information or to register.

James Wiley

Riverside High School/Fine Arts Center

Greer, SC

James was concerned about the statistic showing that only 34% of developmentally/intellectually disabled people are employed. He produced a documentary film explaining the issues faced by young adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities as they look for meaningful work after high school. He said "As a filmmaker, I'm enthused about the genre of documentary film and its capacity to enlighten the audience about problematic issues as well as to showcase solutions. It's all about awareness and empowerment." This documentary includes the valuable perspective of a parent, a business owner, and educators. The project was a collaboration with community leaders and business owners who employ people with special needs to inspire other businesses to give the disabled a chance in the workplace. Opportunity Village in Nevada is highlighted as a model of success. The documentary also examined legislative initiatives which encourage the hiring of disabled individuals. Local businesses and organizations which supported this project include Indexx Printing, The Chandler School, and Greenville County School District Administration. James plans to submit 66 Percent to various film festivals to increase awareness of the issue. The film may be viewed on its Facebook page: 66 Percent. It's also available on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4J4wnY1RdY>

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Class of 2015

First Place Winners

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.

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.

Second Place Winners

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.

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.

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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.

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.

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.

Rhett Baker

*St. Joseph's High School
Greenville, SC*

Rhett started a program called "Frazee Friends". He organized students from St. Joseph's to visit the preschool children at Frazee Dream Center once a week during our study hall. They played with them, read with them, and made crafts. In December, they made a special Christmas craft and had other holiday crafts throughout the year.

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Desmond Brown

*Scott's Branch High School
Summerton, SC*

Desmond helped create a library for Summerton. Summerton has three schools in the district. There is the Summerton Early Childhood Center which houses grades pre-k-second, there is St. Paul Elementary which houses grades third-sixth and there is Scott's Branch Middle/High which houses grades seventh-twelfth. Each school competed by grade level. Each student and teacher was asked to donate slightly used books. At the early childhood and elementary schools, students were asked to bring donations to their homeroom teachers and a student from each class kept track of their class's donations. At the high school there was a student liaison at each grade level that will track the donations of their grade-level. There was also be a teacher advisor at each school that kept track of the teacher donations. The schools donated the entire month of September because that is National Literacy month. The donations were made to the community center on September 30th. The teacher who donated the most books at each school received a \$25 gift card. Each class that donated the most books at each school received a pizza party.

Drew Davis

*Orangeburg Wilkinson High School
Orangeburg, SC*

Drew created Project Ember. The goal was to create a spark in students to become not only great, but productive citizens. He created a program at his high school (Orangeburg Wilkinson) that partnered seniors with freshman, to help them tackle the academic and social aspects of high school. While being a "big brother/sister", the pairs performed community service projects together, in order to create productive citizens. They accomplished various community service projects, such as: Healing Species, tutoring students, visiting convalescence homes, donating to Toys for Tots, and adopt-a-highway.

Khalil Gamble

*James F. Byrnes High School
Moore, SC*

Khalil created Spartan Productions. He gathered a group of student actors from his school whose goal was to connect the elderly population with high school students. This comedy troupe visited various nursing homes in Spartanburg to spread joy and laughter.

The Riley Institute at Furman ®
Emerging Public Leaders
Spring Projects Presentations

Andrew James

*Greenville High School
Greenville, SC*

Andrew called Roots Serves and which was a team of students from different schools who performed service projects once a month. In October, Roots Serves packaged toiletries and water for the homeless in the wake of the big storm that swept through our state. Our second event was a Thanksgiving meal for the residents at the Summit. We packaged 90 meals and distributed them to the individuals in the lobby. Each event had around 20 volunteers representing numerous local high schools.

Elizabeth Marron

*Greenville High School
Greenville, SC*

Elizabeth wanted to help the children at the Frazee Dream Center. She distributed donated supplies from League Academy in Greenville and took it to the Frazee Center last month. Students at her high school volunteered and gathered needed supplies and brought them to the center.

Alexis Wright

*Greenville High School
Greenville, SC*

Alexis' project focused on empowering girls with different humanitarian backgrounds. She worked with local female leaders and role models to speak to high school girls to empower them.