



May 2009

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation is pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 Community Service Award. The annual award recognizes U.S. Foreign Service youth who demonstrate outstanding volunteer efforts in service to their community or to their peers. Two winners received \$750 cash or a \$1,500 U.S. Government savings bond made possible by Clements Insurance. In 2009, the panel of judges chose to recognize a third nominee with an honorable mention. All three individuals were honored at the Youth Awards Ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Room in the Harry S. Truman Building in Washington, DC on July 17, 2009.

Cristin Middaugh

Cristin Middaugh, age 16, was selected to receive one of two community service awards for her support of the Pichincha School in the indigenous community of Morochos, Ecuador. Cristin is the daughter of Crist and Denise Middaugh, currently posted to Quito, Ecuador. She recently completed the 11th grade at the Academia Cotopaxi. Cristin's project began in December 2007, when she chose to sponsor the Pichincha School in lieu of receiving Christmas presents. She raised \$1,200 from family and friends in the United States and within the U.S. Embassy community, and used the money to buy school supplies for all 130 Pichincha students. The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust supported her efforts with a fund of \$1,800, which Cristin used to purchase school uniforms for the students. In December 2008, she organized a campaign within the Embassy and Academia Cotopaxi communities to sponsor families in Morochos. The response was overwhelming; just before Christmas Cristin and her family, Academia Cotopaxi National Honor Society members, and families from the U.S. Embassy presented Morochos residents with donations of food, clothing, toys, and money. In her spare time, Cristin serves as president of the National Honor Society, plays soccer and volleyball, and participates in the Model United Nations.

Sean Titus

Sean Titus, age 13, was selected to receive one of two community service awards for his water well-building project in the small village of Santa Emilia, El Salvador. Sean is the son of Donn-Allan Titus and Mari Jenefsky-Titus, currently posted to San Salvador, El Salvador. He recently completed the 8th grade at the Academia Británica Cuscatleca. Sean's project began as a Tikkun Olam (Hebrew for "repairing the world") as part of his Bar Mitzvah. After learning about the high rate of infant mortality attributed to the lack of potable water in rural El Salvador, Sean set a goal to raise \$5,000 and build a well. He organized a "Strike Up the Water" bowling fundraiser, and promoted his idea at schools, churches, his synagogue, embassies and local businesses in El Salvador. With the money in hand, Sean partnered with a U.S. Christian NGO to dig the well in Santa Emilia. Together with his Boy Scout troop, he also collected trash from the banks of the river that had been the source of some of the drinking water for the community.

The well was inaugurated on March 26, 2009, in a ceremony that was attended by the U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, the only Rabbi in El Salvador, local residents and government officials, and local and national media. It modeled the American ideal of giving back to the community and demonstrated that two faiths can work together to achieve a common goal. In his free time, Sean is an active member of the Boy Scouts, enjoys playing basketball, tennis and cricket, and is an Honor Roll student.

Maryam Ahson

Maryam Ahson, age 14, was awarded an honorable mention for her “Fabric NOT Plastic” campaign in Beijing, China. Maryam is the daughter of Mazhar and Nancy Ahson, currently posted to Cairo, Egypt. She recently completed the 8th grade at Cairo American College. After learning that 60% of ocean garbage is plastic, which can kill marine life, Maryam developed a multi-faceted environmental campaign that included teaching lessons to the Brownie Girl Scouts, creating posters, and selling fabric shopping bags. The money raised from bag sales was donated to a U.S. non-profit marine aquarium. Maryam also won a speech-writing competition sponsored by the Wyland Foundation. Her speech about the environment was delivered to a crowd of 500 citizens and Olympic officials, and broadcast on Chinese national television. In her free time, Maryam swims and plays team volleyball. She is also an avid fan of dolphins.

Everyone associated with the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, the Family Liaison Office and the Department of State congratulates the 2009 community service award winners and nominees. These outstanding U.S. Foreign Service youth demonstrate the generosity of spirit that is truly American.

2010 Community Service Award nominations are due in April 2010. To receive more information about the awards and other exciting programs organized by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, please send an email to fsyf@fsyf.org.