



Association for Middle Level Education
4151 Executive Parkway, Suite 300
Westerville, Ohio 43081 | www.amle.org

August 2016

Dear Colleague:

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program is launching its 22nd annual search for young people who have made meaningful contributions to their communities through volunteer service over the past year.

Once again, the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) is proud to support this unique youth recognition program. I encourage you to make sure your schools takes advantage of the opportunities that it provides.

Sponsored by Prudential Financial and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the awards program has honored more than 115,000 middle level and high school volunteers since 1995. Even more important, it has provided schools with an ideal opportunity to promote volunteerism throughout their student bodies. This is how the program works:

- The process begins at the school level. After students fill out applications online and submit them to their principals, schools select their top youth volunteers, present them with certificates, and recognize them as role models for all of their students.
- Each school's top applicant receives the President's Volunteer Service Award (if he or she has contributed the minimum number of volunteer hours to qualify) and is evaluated by a state-level judging panel, which selects the top middle grades and high school candidate in each state and the District of Columbia.
- These State Honorees win unrestricted awards of \$1,000, beautifully engraved silver medallions and an all-expense-paid trip with a parent to Washington, D.C., for several days of national recognition events, including spectacular award ceremonies, celebrity speakers (Hilary Swank was this year's keynote), a Potomac River dinner cruise, and Congressional visits on Capitol Hill.
- Hundreds of other state-level honorees receive bronze medallions or special certificates. Honorees also typically receive considerable public recognition by peers and community leaders, news coverage in local media, and commendations from elected officials.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of this program is the recognition it provides for middle grades youth. Every year, one-half of its 102 State Honoree awards, and five of its 10 national awards, are granted to students in grades 5 through 8. However, the number of middle grades applications received from some states has been surprisingly low. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity this program provides by working with your colleagues to identify your school's middle level volunteers.

All middle grades and high school principals have been sent a packet that contains everything needed to easily implement the program. If your school does not receive one, you can obtain program instructions at <http://spirit.prudential.com> or by calling 877-525-8491. Students must submit the online application by **November 8**. The deadline for schools to submit applicants to the state-level judging committee this year is **November 18**.

Participating in The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a great way to reward and call attention to students in your school who have distinguished themselves through volunteer activities. Also, at a time when schools and young people are so often the subjects of bad news in the media, this program presents a great opportunity to publicize the wonderful things that kids are doing and the positive role that schools play in promoting community involvement.

Thank you for helping AMLE make this program an even greater success at middle grades schools in the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William D. Waidelich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William D. Waidelich, Ed.D.
Executive Director