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NEWS RELEASE

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Two Students Win Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

(Santa Fe, NM)— Carley Frick, 17, of Albuquerque and Kimberly Turner, 13, of Alamogordo are New Mexico's top youth volunteers for 2008 by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism.

Carley, nominated by Sandia High School in Albuquerque, tutored homeless children and developed a books-on-tape program. Kimberly, nominated by Chaparral Middle School in Alamogordo, started a "Blanket and Bath Blitz" for victims of domestic violence. As state honorees, each received \$1,000, and engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in May to Washington, D.C.

"I congratulate Carley and Kimberly for the thoughtful and generous work they provided to their communities," said New Mexico Education Secretary Veronica C. García. "I hope to see more students like Carley and Kimberly share their energy, leadership, and creativity to community projects throughout New Mexico."

Carley, a senior at Sandia High School, recruited fellow Key Club members to tutor homeless children at a local elementary school and developed a books-on-tape program to help the children improve their reading comprehension skills. During the tutoring sessions, Carley realized that "these children do not have access to books on a regular basis." She conceived a project called "Carley's Reading Corner." She collected books and cassette tapes, sought permission from publishers, recorded the books with a tape player, and drew up comprehension questions for each book. She then taught the children how to use the tape recorder so they could follow along with books when she was not here to help them. She also designed activities to enable the kids to work on specific reading skills.

"Creating programs to improve reading comprehension is a very important part of educating our youth and helping them prepare for their future endeavors in life," said Carley.

Kimberly, a seventh-grader at Chaparral Middle School, started an annual school and community drive to collect donated blankets and toiletries for victims of domestic violence. "They leave their homes with nothing, and they need everything to start a new life free from abuse," Kimberly said. To help address their needs, Kimberly conducted a "Blanket and Bath Blitz" at her school to collect bed sheets, blankets, towels and bath supplies for women and children staying at a shelter in Alamogordo. The next year she expanded her "Blitz" to include two other middle schools and local businesses. She made posters, created a public service announcement for local radio stations, arranged for drop-off locations throughout the community, and then collected and delivered all of the donated items to the shelter.

"I would tell other people to get involved because you never know who you have helped, or if one day you will be the person needing the help," said Kimberly

In addition, two other New Mexico students received Distinguished Finalist awards for their impressive community service. Jacob Wellman, 18, of Albuquerque, a senior at Cibola High School, and Christopher Simpson, 15, of Raton, a sophomore at Trinidad High School in Trinidad, Colorado.

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Jacob built an outdoor picnic area for a school that had no place for its students to eat lunch. He raised more than \$700 for the materials, solicited in-kind donations, recruited 50 fellow Boy Scouts and friends to assist, and managed the transformation of a barren outdoor area into a welcoming lunch spot for students and teachers.

Christopher sought donations and recruited 20 fellow volunteers to help him replace the roof of a local animal shelter. Christopher and his team also cleaned up the shelter's grounds and installed a new shelf in its office.

The awards program, now in its 13th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). For more information and applications for the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Award program, go to www.prudential.com/spirit

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