



SERVE OHIO
Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: September 27, 2012

CONTACT: Nadine Wise

614-995-5269

nadine.wise@serveohio.gov

The 2012 ServeOhio Awards Honor Statewide Service and Volunteerism

Six local volunteers and groups awarded with cash award for impactful service throughout Ohio

Columbus, OH. – ServeOhio, Ohio’s commission on service and volunteerism, along with their Stewards of Service corporate partners Honda of America MFG., Inc. and AEP Ohio honored six exemplary volunteers, volunteer groups and service initiatives. Each winner received a cash award of \$1,500 to support the organization which benefited from the winner’s service.

ServeOhio Commissioners presented the awards at the 2012 Annual Ohio Conference on Service and Volunteerism on September 18th. Winners were chosen in the following categories: Outstanding Adult Volunteer, Outstanding Youth Volunteer, Outstanding Volunteer Group, Outstanding National Days of Service Project, Outstanding National and Community Service Program and Outstanding Corporate Volunteer Initiative.

“ServeOhio recognizes that volunteerism and service improves lives in Ohio every minute of every day,” Executive Director William Hall shares. “We are honored to celebrate the impact of everyday citizens who reach beyond themselves to help their neighbors and communities – by shaping who we are as individuals and a state.”

The 2012 ServeOhio Award winners for the following categories are:

Holly Graham (Thornville) – Outstanding Adult Volunteer

Holly Graham spearheads multiple initiatives to improve the lives of children in Lakewood Local Schools. In the Future City Program, Holly provides students with hands-on learning experience utilizing math and science in the development of a virtual city. As the leader of the Get On Track program, Holly has secured over \$20,000 to open an office for students to explore post-secondary opportunities; over 200 students were served in the last school year. Holly’s latest effort was the establishment of the Lakewood Education Foundation.

Abbey Fields (Radnor) – Outstanding Youth Volunteer:

Abbey Fields, a junior at Buckeye Valley High School, is the founder of the Thank Goodness I’m Female (TGIF) project and the Girl Action League (GAL). Drawing from her own experiences, Abbey developed the grassroots anti-bullying program to help young girls deal with the issues of relational aggression while forming and maintaining healthy, positive relationships. Established on the foundation of open dialogue, skill building, and youth mentoring the program has expanded throughout Delaware County – gaining regional, state and national attention along the way.

Ganther’s Place Neighborhood Block Watch (Columbus) – Outstanding Volunteer Group:

The Ganther’s Place Neighborhood Block Watch started in 2003 with a modest membership (3) and covering a single block. Today the group boasts over 100 volunteers covering 26 blocks and 350 homes. Beautification efforts started by the group have evolved into larger neighborhood revitalization efforts. The group’s “Plant Pride on Parsons” initiative involves beautification projects along Parsons Avenue and has swelled into contiguous neighborhoods, impacting hundreds of residents by reducing blight and crime.

UGIVE.ORG 9/11 Day of Service (Cincinnati) – Outstanding National Days of Service Project:

Planned by UGIVE’s High School Summer Interns, over 400 high school students provided 720 service hours to complete four projects in Step Up Cincinnati. The summer interns (60 students from 28 different high schools) do all the planning and preparation for the day – communications, logistics, project development and the event after-party. The interns provide an additional 1,800 hours in event preparation which provides an economic impact of over \$80,000 to the Cincinnati community.

Rural Action (Trimble) – Outstanding National and Community Service Program:

Rural Action has a long history with National Service. For the past 18 years they have utilized AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps VISTA members to improve lives within Ohio’s Appalachian region. Over 365 VISTA members have served a combined 712,228 hours working on issues such as health care, cultural heritage, low-income housing repair, and poverty alleviation. Since 2009, AmeriCorps members, serving as part of the Ohio Stream Restore Corps, have focused on environmental education and action – improving water quality in six watersheds and allowing six new species of fish to inhabit local streams.

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management (Cincinnati) – Outstanding Corporate Volunteer Initiative:

In a few short months Merrill Lynch and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul have joined forces to create a major, long term impact for Cincinnati children and families in need. Merrill Lynch employees hoped to raise \$5,000 for the purchase of 50 beds and bedding materials for local residents – they raised over \$13,000 just for the mattress fund alone. Their recent Back to School Bash provided 200 backpacks, school supplies and school uniforms that were distributed to families as part of a community carnival organized and implemented by Merrill Lynch employees.

Nominators submitted award forms based on three criteria: accomplishments, data and supporting documents. For pictures or more information on the winners, visit www.serveohio.org.

###

ServeOhio is Ohio’s Governor-appointed Commission on Service and Volunteerism. ServeOhio strengthens local communities through service and volunteerism. Through programs and initiatives funded and supported by ServeOhio, such as AmeriCorps, thousands of Ohioans of all ages engage in and are recognized for their service. Interested participants may learn more about ServeOhio at www.serveohio.org, or find us on Facebook and Twitter.