



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 10, 2009

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Governor to Honor Points of Light Award Winners

Lincoln, Neb. – Gov. Dave Heineman will present the Nebraska Governor's Points of Light Awards at a proclamation ceremony Wednesday, August 12 at 10:30 a.m. in the Warner Chamber at the State Capitol in Lincoln. The awards are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

This quarter's winners:

YOUTH Category: Monika Lukasiewicz, Omaha

While a student of the Occupational Therapy Program at the College of Saint Mary, Monika Lukasiewicz served her school as the President of the Student Occupational Therapy Association. In this capacity, she worked diligently to turn the association into the active student group it is today. Students in this association are involved in service and fund raising projects throughout the year. In November 2008, she brought national attention to her service-learning experience in an article entitled "Peer-ing into a Future of Collaboration" that was published in the American Occupational Therapy Association's national magazine. In the community, she has provided more than 100 hours of community service by developing a creative and successful camp program, "Live Leadership Camp," that empowers young girls. Monika has also worked with Mercy Housing's Mason Apartments by developing and implementing a health and wellness program for the apartment's residents.

ADULT Category: Kathleen "Katie" Packard, Lincoln

In 2008, Clinic with a Heart provided over 2,000 free health visits to patients who don't have health insurance or who are under insured. Patients received medical, dental, physical therapy and chiropractic services. These services could not be provided without the tireless dedication of over 1400 volunteers.

One key volunteer is Kathleen Packard, Assistant Professor at Creighton University. Kathleen and her Creighton Pharmacy students spent a semester preparing a new formulary for the Clinic. This new tool improved resource utilization by helping the clinic's medical providers prescribe the most cost effective medications possible. Katie took the project to her department chair who agreed to adopt the project as a key area of study to see if the new tool will reduce pharmacy expenses. Katie's efforts will eventually help patients in many other clinics throughout the region and country, including patients who are non-English speakers.

GROUP Category: United Methodist Ministries, Omaha

United Methodist Ministries has been committed to social justice in Nebraska since 1966. UMM offers support for marginalized populations, diversity programming for youth, advocates for the Spanish-speaking community, and provides opportunities for volunteers to participate in social justice work.

In 2005, United Methodist Ministries launched The Big Garden project in economically challenged areas of east Omaha. Today the Big Garden network encompasses 21 vegetable gardens that yield literally tons of fresh produce

each year. Neighborhood residents are working in these gardens, growing their own food and learning to develop healthier lifestyles through educational programs for all ages. As an accredited Volunteers In Mission site, UMM hosts hundreds of volunteers from the region each year. They provide opportunities for youth and adults to work alongside neighborhood residents in the gardens or assist with services in local food pantries and homeless shelters. In 2008 a total of 360 people volunteered for 619 days.

Each quarter, Commissioners from ServeNebraska review award nominations and make final recommendations to the Governor. The Points of Light awards are sponsored by Woodmen of the World.

To learn more or nominate individuals and groups who have made a difference through volunteerism for a Governor's Points of Light Award, please visit serve.nebraska.gov, or contact 402-471-6225 or (800) 291-8911.

ServeNebraska pursues its mission of mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

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