

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 13, 2014

CONTACT:
Kimberle Hall, 402-471-6228
kim.hall@nebraska.gov

Lincoln volunteers recognized by Governor with points of light award

(Lincoln, Neb.) Governor Heineman presented the points of light award to three outstanding Lincoln volunteers Wednesday, August 13, 2014 in a ceremony at the State Capitol. The three award recipients, Avni Srivastav (youth category), Maggi Thorne (adult category), and Southwood Lutheran Church (group category) were recognized for their community involvement. The awards are sponsored by ServeNebraska and are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

As an active participant in Youth Leadership Lincoln (YLL), Avni Srivastav was dedicated to academic success and her curiosity about civic and community engagement stood out. She applied to YLL to learn more about how Lincoln functions and grow her leadership skills and experience. She sought out many different ways to engage in the community both inside and of outside school. As a student at Lincoln Southeast High School, Avni was involved in show choir, student council and one-on-one tutoring. At Lincoln Public Schools Entrepreneurship Focus Program she was the vice president of FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) and won the state-wide business pitch competition hosted by the UNL, College of Business Administration. In the community she served as the youth program chair on the TEDxLincoln youth steering committee.

Avni has served on Mayor Beutler's youth advisory committee, and she volunteered as a student spokesperson for Lincoln Public Schools, routinely encouraging youth to become involved in community building through service, business and social entrepreneurship, and political involvement.

As the international spokesperson for Soles4Souls, Maggi Thorne has traveled across the globe to engage communities in helping to wear out poverty by the simple gift of used shoes. She initiated and led the effort of a major shoe drive called "The Greatest Shoe Drive on Earth", to break a world record for most shoes collected and partnered with the Mayor of Lincoln and the Lincoln Waste Haulers. Over 20 businesses in Lincoln and Omaha hosted a collection site. In addition, Maggi created an online presence that people engaged in nationally.

To date over 10,000 shoes have been collected to benefit thousands of lives living in poverty.

As Mrs. Great Plains International 2014, Maggi has helped at over 60 community events since 2013 above and beyond her work with Soles4Souls.

Southwood Lutheran Church has been a very active supporter of many Tabitha programs for over 45 years. The members of Southwood have accumulated over 25,000 volunteer hours for Tabitha over that time. Every week Southwood members deliver eight routes for the Meals on Wheels program. Youth groups from Southwood decorate paper sacks and make holiday cards for Meals on Wheels clients, and church members provide minor home repair or cleaning services for clients who have limited income and ability.

Continuous volunteer recruitment allows Southwood to engage its parishioners in meaningful service opportunities. The relationship that has developed between Southwood and Tabitha benefits clients, as well as the community as a whole.

To nominate individuals and groups for the Governor's Points of Light Awards who have made a difference through volunteerism and service, visit www.serve.nebraska.gov. The next nomination deadline is September 15, 2014.

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

###