

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 15, 2014

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

Tekamah-Herman Schools FCCLA receive Governor's points of light award

(Lincoln, Neb.) For seven years Tekamah-Herman School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Burt County Food Bank and Tekamah-Herman, Decatur Church/Community Council have partnered to facilitate a backpack program in school to help families in need of food for their children on the weekends. The program runs from October through May and started with 6 families, and to date 32 families now receive a meal and a voucher for 1 gallon of milk. The FCCLA students also raise funds to help purchase the food and hold food drives throughout the year for the food pantry and the back pack program.

Governor Heineman recognized the school group for their community involvement on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 with the Governor's Points of Light youth award at a ceremony in the Warner Chamber at the State Capitol. 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.

The backpack program includes filling and delivering the backpacks, which takes 15 minutes to complete for the FCCLA members, in grades 9-12. Student volunteers contribute approximately one hour per week throughout the 40-week school year.

"There is a commitment that these students make. I find it very heartwarming to see their enthusiasm to reach out and help others. This is a project that seems to be getting bigger each year. The community connection with the school and the FCCLA students is vital to this program. We need their help and they need us to make this program work," said Patty Olson, director of the backpack program.

These partnerships have made students more aware of the challenges that their community faces. It has inspired them to consider other ways to volunteer. For example, the FCCLA sponsors a coat drive every year to collect warm outerwear for distribution not only locally but also through the Salvation Army in Omaha. A relationship has also been forged with the Salvation Army's Night Watch program and the FCCLA has provided volunteers the past six years to further their program and mission.

Tekamah-Herman FCCLA also received the 2014 First Lady's Outstanding Community Partnership in Education award on April 11. This award is presented to partnerships among community organizations, schools, government agencies, or others including national service that demonstrate cooperation and combining resources, bringing significant advantages to volunteer service in education.

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

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

###