

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gering youth receives Governor's Points of Light Award for volunteer efforts with disadvantaged youth

Lincoln, Neb. – Erin Carter, was honored Wednesday, February 14, 2014 by Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem 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 presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

As a high school sophomore, Erin began volunteering as a peer outreach worker for Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska (CAPWN). Erin has had the opportunity to have a direct impact on young people's lives that are living in out of home placements within the community. She spends her time listening to the youth and helping them work through their struggles, assisting with homework, conducting an after school program and so much more. Following graduation, she has continued to volunteer for CAPWN and in the past year logged over 1,300 volunteer hours. She now works to engage new volunteers and trains them to work with the youth programs.

"Erin, while volunteering, was an awesome "Peer Mentor", the youth really related well to Erin and she did a great job with them. She would come over to our Youth Shelter and play board games, watch movies or play video games with them. Great fun was always had," said Deb Shuck, Emergency Care Coordinator, Panhandle Youth Shelter, Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Scotts Bluff County has some of the highest poverty rates among children as well as poor child well-being indicators compared to the state of Nebraska as a whole. Erin's work with youth has been a huge asset to the Scottsbluff community and surrounding towns. She has instilled hope among the young people she works with and shown them opportunities where they had previously felt none.

Erin has participated in the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services collaborative for the past year. She serves on the Panhandle's System of Care for Older Youth committee and was recently chosen as a youth co-chair for the state's system of care core strategy team involving trauma informed care and practices for youth and families. Through her community work involving systems of care, Erin has been able to be a youth voice and advocate for change among the local communities and across the state.

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 March 15, 2014.

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

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