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ServeNebraska Names Finalists from 11 Communities for Step Forward Awards

Lincoln, Nebraska – ServeNebraska (historically the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission) named the 2017 finalists for the most prestigious statewide volunteer recognition program, the Step Forward Awards.

To be selected as finalists, nominees must have demonstrated leadership, innovation and dedication to service through special projects or ongoing activities that address community needs. Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts reviewed the nominations and selected the finalists.

All nominees are invited to a banquet on Friday, October 27, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Quarry Oaks Golf Club in Ashland, Nebraska. Foley will present the awards.

“Volunteering is part of our DNA in Nebraska. It’s one of the reasons our communities are so strong,” said Cathleen Plager, ServeNebraska executive director. “So often, volunteers in Nebraska think nothing of the time they give, and ask for no recognition. But we want them to know how much we value their service.”

A total of 28 individuals and organizations from 11 communities were selected as finalists for the awards.

Dori Bush of Grand Island, Wilbur (Bud) Dasenbrock of Lincoln and Ruth McKinstry of Lincoln are finalists for the esteemed lifetime achievement award.

Finalists in the category of adult volunteer included Casie Allen of Nemaha, Jill Crook of Syracuse, and Justin Evertson of Lincoln.

The following volunteers are finalists for the youth volunteer leadership award: Cooper Bates of Wilber, Cole Williams of Geneva, and Audrey Worthing of Elm Creek.

In the category of volunteer group, the Aquatic Society of Omaha, and the Habitat for Humanity Regular Construction Crew and Union College, both in Lincoln, were named finalists.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska and First National Bank in Omaha, as well as Fiserv in Lincoln, were named finalists in the corporate community volunteer category.

Finalists for dedicated leadership in national service programs like AmeriCorps include Blake Frederick of Lincoln, and Mallory Johnson and Martin Macias, Jr., both of Omaha.

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The following individuals are being recognized as veteran volunteer finalists: Jim Cada of Lincoln and Ron Hernandez and Russ Zeeb, both of Papillion.

In the category of disaster volunteers, Reynolds Davis of Lincoln, Wayne Kilmer of Minatare and Tri County CERT of Bellevue were named finalists.

Dennis Buckley of the Lincoln Journal Star Neighborhood Extra has been named a finalist for community media partner.

ServeNebraska's Step Forward Awards program is being organized in coordination with the Nebraska 150 Celebration. The Nebraska 150 Foundation, Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission, and the Celebrating Nebraska Statehood Board will be recognized at the luncheon. Their leadership and inspiration mobilized hundreds of volunteer participants through the Nebraska Impact Initiative.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, AAA – The Auto Club Group, Mallette Farms, Midlands Mentoring Partnership, Bennie and Jamesena Moore, and Searcy Group Home Real Estate are sponsors for the event.

About ServeNebraska

ServeNebraska is governed by a 20-member, bipartisan board appointed by the Nebraska governor. Its mission mobilizes Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through collaboration, volunteering and national service. ServeNebraska oversees AmeriCorps programming, hosts the state's most prestigious volunteer awards, the Step Forward Awards, and provides training and technical assistance. To learn more, visit www.serve.nebraska.gov.

About Nebraska Impact

The Nebraska Impact Initiative is one of a series of efforts launched for the state's year-long 150th statehood celebration. Using the modern web console available at www.NebraskaImpact.com, volunteers are empowered to connect with each other and with organizations in need of service to make a greater impact on their communities in 2017. The effort will total statewide volunteer hours annually to demonstrate Nebraskans' deep-seated commitment to service.

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