

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 16, 2011**

**CONTACT:**  
**Kimberle Hall, 402-471-6228**  
**[kim.hall@nebraska.gov](mailto:kim.hall@nebraska.gov)**

## **“Heartland Honor Flights” Organizers Receive Governor Points of Light Award**

**Lincoln, Neb.** – Governor Dave Heineman presented the Nebraska Governor's Points of Light Awards at a ceremony in Warner Chamber at the State Capitol in Lincoln on February 16 at 10:30 a.m. The awards are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

Bill and Evonne Williams were recognized for the Governor's Point of Light Adult Award for their tremendous effort in organizing Operation Airlift which became “Heartland Honor Flights”. In total, more than 1,500 Nebraska WWII veterans were flown to Washington D.C. to see the WWII Memorial on the National Mall for the first and possibly the only time. Bill and Evonne were the organizers and the fundraisers for the Heartland Honor Flights dedicating their time, energy and commitment to managing every aspect of the Flights.

They recruited volunteers or “guardians” throughout the State to help them orchestrate pre-flight dinners with WWII musical performances, slide-shows of the men and women while in service, their hotel and travel accommodations, and arranged the presence of dignitaries including Governor Heineman and other special guests. Each trip was a full 24 hours and included making arrangements for chartering planes, securing buses, meals, mobility and personal needs. Every veteran received a fanny pack filled with disposable cameras and water bottles for their tour. Following the last Heartland Honor Flight the Williams’ hosted a reunion for all of the veterans and volunteers.

One of the guardians stated, that Bill and Evonne are amazing people and their volunteer efforts have made an enormous impact on more than just the veterans. The veteran’s families and the guardians know they have been blessed to participate in this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Also recognized at the ceremony and receiving the Youth Award was Taylor Grace, a junior at Platte View High School in Springfield, for her volunteer efforts in organizing a campus beautification and vegetable garden for the Salvation Army Lied Renaissance Center in Omaha. The Group Award was presented to Mourning Hope Grief Center in Lincoln for their dedicated and trained volunteers in working with bereaved children and families.

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 nominate individuals and groups for the Governor’s Points of Light Awards who have made a difference through volunteerism, visit the ServeNebraska website at [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov) or call 800-291-8911 or 402-471-6228.

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

- ### -