



Public Law 96-114

The Congressional Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congress to join Michael Oher and community leaders in honoring 252 recipients of the Congressional Award Gold Medal in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. (June 23, 2010) – Members of Congress will join community leaders in honoring the 252 recipients of the Congressional Award Gold Medal in Washington, D.C., on June 23, 2010. This annual event highlights Congress' highest honor for youth and will recognize individuals that have dedicated hundreds of hours of service in their communities.

NFL star **Michael Oher** —whose meteoric rise from the street to the NFL was the inspiration behind the 2010 Oscar-winning film *The Blindside*— will receive the Horizon Award for his commitment to serving America's youth. **Jessica Kumari** and **Steven Fabian** of *Channel One News* will host the ceremonies, and Deputy Secretary of Education **Anthony Wilder Miller** will deliver a keynote address.

Mrs. Helen Gannon, president of St. Louis Irish Arts, received the Inspiration Award for her exceptional work as a Congressional Award advisor. Her outstanding dedication and service in honoring the initiative, achievement and excellence of America's youth has led many of her students at St. Louis Irish Arts to earn Congressional Award Gold Medals— this year, she advised seven of Missouri's 10 medalists.

At the center of this event are the 252 medalists that took the challenge and dedicated hundreds of hours to Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness and Expedition/Exploration. This year's participants are from a variety of backgrounds and represent almost all fifty states. Their work exemplifies the cornerstones of the Congressional Award: initiative; service to others; and achievement.

Having faced hardship in his own past, Oher serves as an inspiration to millions. Despite the busy schedule of an NFL player, he has devoted much of his time outside of football to working with underprivileged youth— specifically those in foster care. In a recent visit to a school for troubled children, the Baltimore Ravens' starting left tackle encouraged the youth to “keep fighting, keep overcoming adversity.”

Likewise, keynote speaker Anthony Wilder Miller is no stranger to serving others. Before being confirmed by the Senate to his current position, Miller worked extensively with the Los Angeles Unified School District, where he developed student achievement goals and strategies. He took on similar work with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

Throughout the year, Congressional Award Medalists are honored at local ceremonies and medal presentations by Members of Congress at the district and state levels. Since its inception in 1979, the Congressional Award has recognized thousands of young Americans committed to serving their country and improving themselves, representing over 3 million hours of public service and 30,000 students – all of whom are actively working toward their Gold Medal.

For more information, please contact Kati Deschler (above) or visit the Congressional Award website at <http://CongressionalAward.org>.

The Congressional Award, a public-private partnership, established by Congress in 1979 under Public Law 96-114, is a non-competitive program open to young people ages 14-23, regardless of mental or physical challenges, or socioeconomic status. The Congressional Award Foundation teaches participants to set and achieve personally challenging goals that build character, and foster community service, personal development and citizenship. The only other medal awarded by the United States Congress is the Medal of Honor.

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