



# The Congressional Award

## America's Award for Youth

### March - April 2007 Newsletter

#### Message from the National Office

I am Andy Ortiz, and I am the President & CEO of Ortiz Leadership Systems, a leadership consulting and public speaking business based in Tempe, Arizona. I am also a proud member of the Board of Directors of the Congressional Award Foundation, and the current President of the Gold Congressional Award Alumni Association. In March of 1993, I received the Gold Congressional Award in a Capitol Hill ceremony that still represents one of the greatest memories of my life. It also represented the culmination of a great deal of hard work that led to the final accomplishment of this personal goal of earning the Gold Award. The Congressional Award program has influenced me greatly over the years in ways both personal and professional. I have had wonderful experiences in my life and career that have come as a result of the Congressional Award program. The Congressional Award program celebrates the energy, vision and collective promise of young leaders in America. I am committed to helping this wonderful organization and to shape a future for it that is as illustrious as its past. Please feel free to contact me via email at [andrewortiz85281@yahoo.com](mailto:andrewortiz85281@yahoo.com) or via cell phone at 480-688-9292 with your ideas about how best to grow the Gold Congressional Award Alumni Association. As a Board Member of the Congressional Award Foundation, I also welcome your ideas and energy as we seek to build a stronger Congressional Award for future generations of young Americans.



#### 2007 Gold Medal T-Shirts:

The Congressional Award National Office is excited to announce a contest for the 2007 Gold T-Shirts. We are looking for a participant, hopefully from the 2007 Gold Class, to create a design that represents the Congressional Award based on the following words: **Initiative, Service & Achievement** as well as the **Nation's Capital, Washington, DC**. The chosen design will appear on the back of this year's Gold Medalist T-Shirts. These are the T-Shirts that are given to each 2007 Gold Medalist. The design should be in J-PEG Format. All designs need to be submitted to the National Office no later than June 1, 2007.

If you have any questions about the contest or if you would like to submit a design, please email

[Gold@congressionalaward.org](mailto:Gold@congressionalaward.org).

Gold 2007 RSVPs must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2007. For more Gold

Andrew F. Ortiz, J.D., M.P.A.

## Recent Ceremonies



Congressman Gallegly (CA24) held a recent ceremony in his district office to honor recipients.

Congressman Baird (WA03) presented Hadley Alley with his Congressional Award earlier this year.



Geena Choi, pictured with Congressman Chaka Fattah (PA02), and Jim Gerlach (PA06), was one of approximately 120 recipients from PA awarded their medals in a ceremony in Philadelphia on February 20th.



## Participant Spotlight

Dennis Harris II, from Valdosta, GA is pictured shaking hands with Congressman Jack Kingston (GA01). In earning his Silver Medal, Dennis dedicated over 200 hours of Voluntary Public Service at the local Boys and Girls Club. He chaperoned outdoor activities and assisted in promoting club events. For his Personal Development, Dennis became an active member of the Successful Pre-teens Learning And Sharing Humanity (SPLASH) program. For Physical Fitness, Dennis trained for the Air Force Academy Aptitude Examination.



2007 information, please see the [website](#).

## Participant Quote:

*"Ever since I started the Congressional Award, when I was 15, I've gained so much! My confidence level has grown and the number of skills I've acquired has grown also. The Congressional Award has been very good for me. I'd encourage every teen to pursue it!"*

~Emma Frey, Silver Medalist, St. Louis, MO

## Advisor Quote:

*"Keren has had some amazing, life-changing adventures as she has worked on her requirements. I wish every American teen could have the opportunity of experiences like this to teach them how blessed we are in this country."*

~Peggy Covert, Advisor for Keren Stewart, Redmond, WA.

**Take Action**

- [Search for Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Contact your Member of Congress](#)
- [Sign Up to Receive Email Updates](#)

He exercised twice a week focusing primarily on endurance and upper body strength through a combination of jogging, swimming and weightlifting. In order to fulfill his Expedition/Exploration goal, he planned and executed a two-night trip at Suwanne River State Park, FL. Billy Clemons, one of his Validators feels, "Dennis sets a great example of

today's youth, his enthusiasm and determination made the trip a great success. I know he has a bright future ahead."

## Advisor Spotlight

Martha Barnes has been involved in the Congressional Award since 2003. She initially became interested in the Congressional Award through the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Martha feels that setting long term goals and planning how to get there in measurable steps are great life skills that young people need to learn. She praises the Congressional Award's necessary record keeping as it helps participants organize and plot their own growth and development. One of her most memorable experiences with the Award was seeing a participant not overly enthusiastic about physical fitness take up archery as a new sport and start a regular walking program. Martha feels, "Instilling a habit of community service is good for young people and for their country. It gives them such a sense of accomplishment, empowerment, and a feeling of satisfaction."



## Partnership Spotlight

The Congressional Award first partnered with the National 4-H Council in 1999 based on the idea that both organizations foster citizenship, youth education, mentoring and a commitment to community. Currently, there are over 500 Congressional Award participants who are sponsored by 4-H clubs. This partnership clearly has impressive potential as both organizations work with a similar population and have similar goals and requirements. There are over 7 million youth, between the ages of 8 and 18, participating in 4-H. The program is particularly popular in the Southern and Central regions with large concentrations in the states of Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas. 4-H clubs focus on advancing the personal growth of each member and helping youth to become "contributing, productive, self-directed members of society," a very similar goal to the Congressional Award's aim to encourage "initiative, service, and achievement" in young adults.

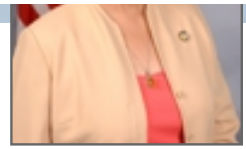


## Congressional Corner

Congresswoman Grace Flores Napolitano (CA38) has always been engaged in civil service and believes it is very important for today's youth to do the same. The Congresswoman believes that youth community involvement is an important link in understanding the possibilities for making a positive difference in the community. Civic involvement allows youth to develop new relationships



with a great variety of people who they can continue learning from thereafter. The Congresswoman believes that the Congressional Award is an important program because it helps to gain an appreciation for community involvement and may help youth to take leadership roles later in life.



She encourages service to our communities and nation through volunteerism and emphasizes that it is an invaluable way to learn issues in depth through those around you, empowering future involvement, and developing your inherent talent, ideas, and energy. She encourages students to become involved and plan for their future, "Always be proud of who you are, and dream big of who you can become. Perseverance and hard work can make those dreams come true."

The Congressional Award Foundation  
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