



# The Congressional Award

America's Award for Youth

## January - February 2007 Newsletter

### Message from the National Office

As we begin a new year it provides the perfect opportunity to take a fresh look at our lives, our goals, and our choices. We all have 86,400 seconds in a day... but how do we choose to spend them? Are we giving back to others, to our communities, to our country?

Are we making new friends and keeping the old? Are we investing in our health and physical well being so that we feel energized and able to do those things we want to do? Are we expanding our horizons and exploring new territory? I work personally with many young people who can answer yes to all these questions because they are actively involved in the Congressional Award Program. I see first hand the difference they make in their communities and in the lives of others. May your new year be all you want it to be and bring with it great joy and good health and may the Congressional Award Program be an important part of 2007 for you all.



*Linda Mitchell*

Vice Chairwoman

### Recent Ceremonies



### Gold Medal 2007

#### Ceremony Dates:

For those participants who submitted their record books on or before the February 1st deadline for this summer's Gold Medal ceremony, any revisions, if requested, must be postmarked by March, 15, 2007.

ALL Gold Medalists will be notified by April 1, 2007 regarding their approval and invitation to the 2007 Gold Medal Ceremony

The 2007 Gold Medal ceremony will be in Washington, DC on June 19th. Given the expected large number of medalists, there will be at least two ceremonies during the day. A reception is planned on the evening of the 18th. Specific details about the event will be arriving in the mail to each Gold Medalist in the coming weeks. We advise participants to NOT make travel arrangements until they have been



Congressman John Culberson (TX07) presented 20 Houston area Girl Scouts with the Congressional Award Medals at a ceremony in the fellowship hall of Bellaire United Methodist Church on November 9, 2006.

James Martin of Groveland, FL received his Bronze and Silver Medals in a ceremony with Congresswoman Ginny Bronw-Waite (FL05) on October 13, 2006.



Margaret DeOliveira of Berkeley Heights, NJ received her Silver Medal in a recent ceremony with Congressman Ferguson (NJ07).



### Participant Spotlight

Alina Sayre, from San Jose, CA is a 2007 Congressional Award Silver Medalist. She is pictured holding her medal with Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (CA16). In earning her Silver Medal, Alina completed over 200 hours of Voluntary Public Service in her community. She served as a full-time volunteer for low-income minority children from her city and also as a camp counselor at



finally approved for their Gold Medal, and receive their Award letter.

### Participant Quote:

*"By participating in the Congressional Award I have found that helping others is one of the best things that a person can do. Also, in being a part of the Congressional Award I have gained respect from others by being reliable and helpful in my community."*

~Angela Dorsey, 2006 Gold Medalist, New Jersey

### Advisor Quote:

*"Arielle is a unique and exceptional young woman. Her compassion for others, the desire to help those in need, and commitment to excellence in both her personal and professional life is rare."*

~Kevin Gersh, Advisor for Arielle Buss, New York



*Three participants in the Migrant Education Program volunteer on Martin Luther King day as part of their Congressional Award volunteer service hours.*

**Take Action**

Daybreak Camp. For her Personal Development, Alina practiced her speech delivering skills and also participated in state and nation wide competitions. For Physical Fitness, Alina disciplined herself to have a 30-minute workout five days a week. She would alternate aerobics with dance routines and walk for about a mile. In order to fulfill her Expedition/ Exploration category, she planned and executed an overnight trip to a lighthouse youth hostel in her city. Nate Sanders, Alina's advisor states, "Alina takes this project very seriously, and works very hard to meet the objectives. She has grown and learned a great deal as a result of participating in this program."

## Advisor Spotlight

Eileen Kane has been an advisor in the Maitland, FL area since 1994. She was initially drawn to the Congressional Award because she loved the idea that local volunteerism was being recognized nationally. She feels that the Award teaches young adults the benefits of working towards a goal as



well as develops their leadership skills. One of her most memorable experiences with the Award was chaperoning the Expedition planned by several of her Advisees for the Silver Medal. She enjoyed seeing the camaraderie of the participants as well as their positive attitudes. Eileen believes, "It's important for the young adults in our society to learn the benefits and joys of helping others at a time in their lives when they have some free time. Hopefully, they will continue to serve others as adults."

## Partnership Spotlight

The partnership between the Congressional Award and the Girl Scouts was established in 1999. Currently, there are over 500 Girl Scouts involved with the Congressional Award. The Girl Scouts of USA was chartered by the United States Congress in 1950. Through a membership in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Girl Scouts USA is part of a worldwide family of 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries. Like many of our partnerships, much of the work accomplished with the Girl Scouts fulfills the requirements for the Congressional Award program. The Congressional Award has attended many Girl Scout National Conferences, and looks forward to continued growth with the organization. Part of the Girl Scout Mission includes learning "the importance of personal responsibility, the value

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of goal-setting, the spirit of teamwork, and the thrill of accomplishment." These are all values highly esteemed by the Congressional Award as well.

## **Congressional Corner**

On July 20, 2006 Congressman Mark Udall (CO02) presented 38 Congressional Award Medals to recipients at the AmeriCorps NCCC graduation for the DC campus in downtown Washington, DC. The Congressman believes that the Congressional Award is valuable because the future of America depends on young people, like the Congressional Award recipients, doing everything they can to realize their full potential. Before entering Congress in 1998, Congressman Udall spent twenty years with Colorado Outward Bound, an organization inspiring character development through different outdoor challenges. The Congressman served as an instructor for many years and spent his last ten years as Executive Director. The Congressman feels "when a young person is involved in their community, they take pride and are invested in that community. As a result, they are more likely to help confront the challenges their community faces and offer their energy and creativity for solutions."



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