



The Congressional Award

America's Award for Youth

September - October 2007 Newsletter

Message from the National Office

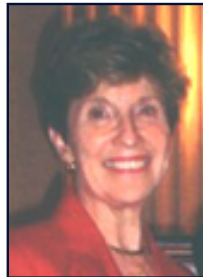
With the start of a new academic year students are once again back in school and participating in a variety of extracurricular activities. Most of these (sports, band, Key Club and other volunteer activities) can easily be incorporated into the Congressional Award Program. It is all a matter of setting goals and working to achieve them. Goal setting in itself is an important life skill which enhances a person's ability to clarify exactly what they want to accomplish and then follow through to completion.

The benefits of the program are innumerable. In addition to promoting volunteerism and giving back to the community, it also empowers young people to take a greater responsibility for their own lives, to discover new talents, and fine-tune skills so as to increase their ability to perform at a higher level. Recently, Samantha Marion of Palm Beach County, expressed her thoughts when she said, "By participating in the Congressional Award I have perfected and gained many characteristics and skill that I value. These are: leadership, dedication, responsibility, organization, discipline, and being more active in my community."

Having worked with hundreds of students in this program, I have witnessed the impact it has had on their lives. It has been tremendous.

Lynn Lyons
Board Member

Warm Welcome



Gold 2007:

The Congressional Award 2007 Gold Medal Ceremony was a huge success with over 160 of the 273 Gold Medalists in Washington, DC for the Gold Medal events.

The week started off with the 2007 Gold Medal Reception and Dinner to recognize the Gold Medalists and supporters of the Award in the public and private sectors. The event was held in the Atrium of the Ronald Reagan Building in downtown Washington, DC with over 500 guests in attendance.

[Learn more...](#)

Gold 2008:

Planning for the Gold Medal Ceremony for 2008 is well under way.

The National Office has already set some important dates.

February 1st: ALL Gold Medal Record

Congressman Bilirakis (FL09) was recently appointed to the Congressional Award Board of Directors by Republican Leader John Boehner. Prior to entering Congress, Representative Bilirakis was elected to four terms as a member of the Florida House of Representatives.



During his tenure in Tallahassee, he chaired several prominent panels, including Crime Prevention, Public Safety Appropriations, and the Economic Development, Trade & Banking Committee. He feels the Congressional Award is a valuable program because it provides an opportunity for America's youth to give back to their communities, while learning the value of setting challenging goals and achieving them. He praises the structured, goal-oriented approach used by the program. The Congressman believes that national service is intrinsically American. As young people volunteer they are making an invaluable contribution to the national fabric that makes American society. He goes on to state that, "Built upon the individual contributions of civic engagement and service, America would not be the same if it did not encourage and depend on the service of others." We welcome the Congressman to the Board!!

Recent Ceremonies



Republican Whip Roy Blunt (MO07) presented Lucian Meyers with his Congressional Award in a ceremony held in Joplin, MO in June 2007.

Books must be postmarked or faxed to the National Office.

March 15th: Any requested revisions must be postmarked or faxed to the National Office.

April 17th: Week-long RSVP form and payment must be postmarked to the National Office. The National Office is planning another extended stay in DC for Gold Medalists. More information regarding the week-long program will be mailed out with approval Gold Packets in the beginning of 2008.

May 1st: ALL RSVP forms must be postmarked, faxed, or emailed to the National Office. Biographies must be emailed to Gold@congressionalaward.org.

[Learn more...](#)

Poker 2007:

The Congressional Award hosted its 2nd Annual Chiefs of Staff Poker Tournament on July 25, 2007. Held at the Washington Regency Hyatt with a spectacular view of the Capitol, the Tournament was attended by over 100 players.

[Learn more...](#)

Staff Update:

Rebecca Aubry, from Weaverville, NC, has joined the Congressional Award as the new Northeast Program Manager. She is a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina with a degree in Sociology.

Leila Decker and Cameron Chalfant received their Congressional Awards in a ceremony with Congresswoman Diane E. Watson (CA33) in August 2007.



Rebecca "Rose" Brazeale received her Congressional Award Medals in a recent ceremony with Congressman John Linder (GA07).

Rebecca Brazeale

Participant Spotlight

Danielle and Timbrel Essma, sisters from Twin Falls, ID, are pictured left to right at the 2007 Congressional Award Gold Medal Reception in Washington, DC. Both girls also attended the Gold Medal Ceremony. In earning her Gold Medal, Danielle



volunteered to teach ballet to younger students. For her Personal Development, she enhanced her knitting and spinning skills to an advanced level. To keep fit, Danielle improved her ballet point work from an intermediate level to an advanced level. For her Expedition, Danielle planned a road trip to Southern Utah to explore some of the national parks. Timbrel served as her junior class's president while working towards her Gold Medal. For her Personal Development, Timbrel furthered her dancing ability. To keep fit, Timbrel rode her bike as often as the weather permitted. Finally, for her Expedition, she helped plan a girls camp at Iron Creek, ID.

Rebecca can be reached at aubry@congressionalaward.org.

Joshua Stockstill, from Springfield, MO, has joined the staff as the new Central Program Manager. Joshua is a recent graduate of Truman State University with a degree in Political Science. Joshua can be reached at stockstill@congressionalaward.org.

Take Action

[Search for Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[Contact your Member of Congress](#)

[Sign Up to Receive Email Updates](#)

Advisor Spotlight

Betsy Hoppe from Winston-Salem, North Carolina has been working with the Congressional Award since 2003. She initially became interested in the Congressional Award after reading about a set of triplets in North Carolina who were involved with the program. She felt the areas of the Congressional Award mirrored those activities valued by her own family. Betsy notes that the program focuses on making young people better citizens--both global citizens and local contributors. She believes that it is important for youth to stay involved with their community. "If every young person in every community would contribute one to two hours a week in volunteer service, they could change the face of that community. Giving money is both necessary and somewhat easy, giving of one's self and one's time is a higher level of commitment in my mind. It couples empathy with action to effect change."



Partnership Spotlight

The partnership between People to People International and The Congressional Award was started in 1986. People to People International's mission is "to enhance international understanding and friendship through educational, cultural and humanitarian activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences directly among peoples of different countries and diverse cultures." People to People International seeks to involve students and adults from around the world in various educational opportunities where they learn more about the world and forge connections with individuals. People to People International also has a scholarship marked for Congressional Award Medalists called the James and Eunice Doty People to People/Congressional Award Scholarship. This scholarship allows the recipient to participate in a People to People International trip during the summer of the next year. Students are eligible to apply for the 2008 scholarship if they earn and receive The Congressional Award prior to October 15, 2007. This date is also the deadline for submission. For more information, please visit <http://www.ptpi.org/programs/scholarships.aspx>.



Congressional Corner

Congresswoman Gillibrand, pictured with Congressional Award Gold Medalist Sam Perkins, represents the 20th district of New York. Before entering Congress, Representative Gillibrand was a practicing attorney in New York City and Albany, NY. She also worked pro-bono for many women's organizations. The Congresswoman believes that for a community to stay healthy it needs to continue to grow and evolve. This growth and evolution is mainly accomplished by its citizens continuing to give and contribute. She feels that "volunteering is a selfless act and one of the most rewarding experiences in life." The Congresswoman praises youth involvement in community service programs, churches, neighborhoods, schools, and clubs because it enables young people to build character and develop goals and skills that they can use throughout their lives. The



Congresswoman concludes, "Whether you are a young person beginning to explore your educational options and choosing your professional path, or you are an older and more experienced person who may want to give some of your personal time by being more involved in your community, a volunteer has the ability to create tremendous impact on an organization and its mission."

The Congressional Award Foundation
PO Box 77440, Washington, DC 20013 : 202-226-0130