

NEWS RELEASE

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Idaho Youths Earn National Volunteer Award

Idaho youths Joseph (Joey) Thomasson of Lewiston and Shelby Kettler of Pocatello were awarded the 2017 Prudential Spirit of Community Award. The award program, in its 22nd year, honors young people in each state for outstanding acts of volunteerism.

Joey and Shelby will each be awarded \$1,000, an engraved medal and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for four days of national recognition events. The events recognize the top two honorees from every state.

Joey, 15, has made more than 200 blankets to keep cancer patients warm during their chemotherapy treatments. Joey decided to launch the project after watching his older brother shiver through years of chemotherapy and now is experiencing this firsthand as a cancer patient himself. "I have been watching my brother go through chemo since I was 3," Joey said. And now, "being a cancer patient myself, I know how cold you can get while you are getting your chemo treatment." Joey was also recognized this year by Lt. Gov. Brad Little as an Idaho's Brightest Star for his volunteerism.

Shelby, 10, organized a collection drive at her school that gathered nearly 1,000 books for children at a local homeless shelter. "I have a big passion for books," Shelby said. "Whenever I can get my hands on an interesting book, I think about people who can't afford them." Shelby not only organized the book drive, but also coordinated delivery to the local homeless shelter.

Two other Idaho teens were recognized as distinguished finalists. Cassandra Brown, 18, of Boise, volunteers to help military children with the Idaho National Guard Child and Youth Programs. Cheyenne Quilter, 18, of Boise, created "Treasure Valley H2O Safety Pals," a water safety awareness movement aimed at teaching kids and their guardians how to swim and safely enjoy the open water.

These Idaho teens contribute to Idaho's status as No. 5 in the nation in for volunteering for the second year in a row according to the Corporation for National and Community Service. To join in the volunteering, you can find opportunities near you at Serveldaho.gov.

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Serve Idaho, a division of the Idaho Department of Labor, encourages voluntary public service and volunteerism throughout the state. The Serve Idaho Commission is funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Idaho Department of Labor.

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