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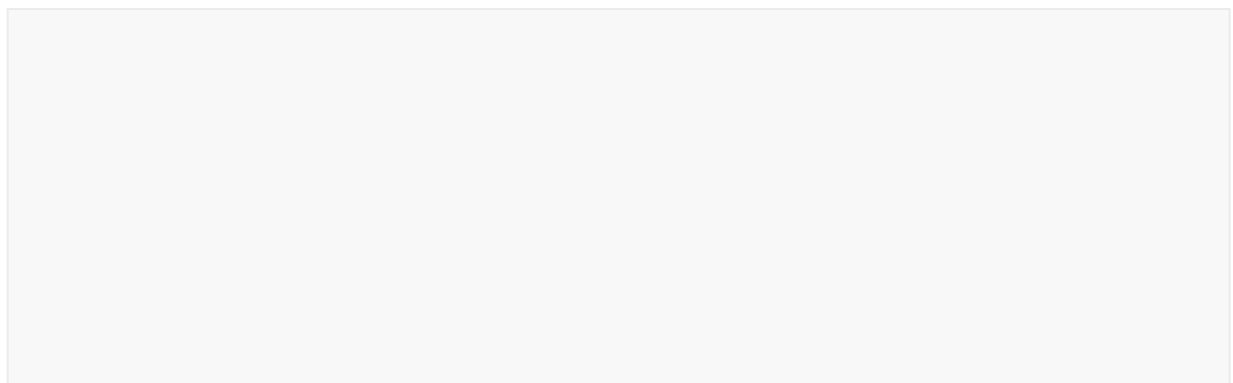
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Anna Ramsey and Finn McFarland stand in front of the Change The World Kids root cellar.



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By Virginia Dean, Standard Correspondent

Two Woodstock Union High School alumni are among 25 nationally selected candidates who were recently awarded the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes.

Finn McFarland and Anna Ramsey were selected for the prize for their outstanding leadership and global contributions, making a positive difference to people and the environment.

Each year, the honor is given to inspiring, public-spirited and highly diverse young people between the ages of eight and 18 from across the country, the top ten of which receive a \$5,000 cash prize to support their service work or higher education. McFarland and Ramsey split the monies that they said will go toward funding their education.

The young ladies spearheaded the building of a community root cellar in order to store fresh local produce for Woodstock's food bank throughout the years. They also designed a Grow Some, Feed Many initiative involving 50 plus farmers and gardeners in growing and donating produce to fill the root cellar.

The two college students developed their project as members of Change the World Kids, a nonprofit student-run activist group whose members undertake humanitarian and environmental activities to make a difference in local communities and throughout the world.

Their root cellar combines the two areas, Ramsey said.

"It has no electricity and isn't causing any environmental strain," said Ramsey. "But it's also humanitarian because of the amount of people we're reaching and the fact that we're bringing healthy food to a different population that might not have had access to it."

McFarland and Ramsey spent many years planting and harvesting fresh vegetables from CTWK's community garden and donated them to the local food bank during the growing season. But they were unable to do so during the winter. Hence, the Food Justice Root Cellar project.

The two young women worked with contractors and excavators, shoveling gravel, pouring cement, and building retaining walls. They filled the root cellar with crates of local produce for the food bank.

They sketched design plans, solicited help from a structural engineer, obtained permits, and launched a \$20,000 campaign needed for construction.

They partnered with the local elementary school teachers and students to create an activity booklet about food justice, healthy nutrition, and growing and preserving vegetables.

"I have found that with passion and determination, I truly can help change the world," said McFarland who is currently a freshman at Cornell University.

Ramsey, who is in her first year at Colby College, has also discovered that helping others comes back full circle and winning an award for it is really attributable to others.

"It's the whole community," said Ramsey. "We had a big committee, and every member of CTWK worked on it at some time."



Ramsey said that, as part of the second chapter of the project, Grow Some, Feed Many, community members are continuing to grow vegetables and put them into the root cellar that is located just behind the Woodstock Elementary School.

"We had to find the perfect gradient, the right slope," said Ramsey. "We looked at many sites and WES was perfect because the school also wanted to get involved and it provides an educational component for the younger kids."

The prize was founded in 2000 after T.A. Barron's mother who apparently was a "quiet hero" in his life. The 2015 cycle opens January 2, 2015 with an April 15, 2015 deadline.

Winners of the prize receive a cash prize in addition to a recognition plaque; a certificate of recognition; a signed copy of "The Hero's Trail" by Barron Prize founder T.A. Barron; a copy of "Dream Big," a documentary film featuring Barron Prize winners; a heroes study guide, curriculum, and bibliography; the opportunity to be paired with an adult member who is interested in working in the winner's area of interest; the opportunity to connect with other prize winners; and numerous media occasions.

"Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world," said T.A. Barron. "And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes - people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Gloria Barron prize: to shine the spotlight on these amazing young people so that their stories will inspire others."