

## **2001 Barron Prize Winners**

*Note: In its first year, the Barron Prize was a statewide award for Colorado youth.*

### **Ashley, age 16, Colorado**

Ashley received the Barron Prize for AfricAid, a non-profit organization she created to help African girls receive an education. Ashley was shocked and moved by the extreme poverty she saw during a trip to Africa when she was eleven years old. Determined to help the African people, Ashley pursued numerous avenues but found only dead ends and frustration. Five years later, she has raised the money, completed the paperwork, and recruited the board members necessary to form her own non-profit group. AfricAid raises money to provide scholarships for girls in Tanzania to attend a local school. Ashley's group also collects much-needed school supplies to send to schools across Africa. "I am excited to have finally found a way to help African people," says Ashley. "They have inspired me and shown me the persevering, unbreakable nature of the human spirit."

### **Estephania and Esperanza, ages 13 and 14, Colorado**

The Chavez sisters created *Project Literacy*, a neighborhood tutoring program where middle school students are helping elementary age kids with reading. After learning that their middle school, Cole, ranked nearly last in Denver and the state in all areas on the CSAP (standardized test), the girls wanted to help. With the support of the non-profit group YouthBiz, Estephania and Esperanza conceived of their tutoring program, wrote a grant, and were awarded \$5,000 for *Project Literacy*. The girls then created program brochures, met with teachers and principals, and recruited tutors. Dozens of elementary school kids enrolled in the program have made measurable progress in reading. "It feels so good to help others and watch them grow," says Esperanza. Her sister adds, "Given the chance, we can do anything, even if we're 'just' kids."

### **Carter, age 16, Colorado**

Carter received the Barron Prize for his leadership role in working with classmates and local government to protect 185 acres along the Yampa River. Carter and his peers worked with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to create a master management plan for the property. Carter developed and managed a web site for the project, allowing community members access to its progress. He created and led various multimedia presentations, including demonstrations to local county commissioners and the State Wildlife Commission. At the dedication of the property as a State Wildlife Area, Carter shared the podium with Governor Owens and spoke of the importance of youth involvement in the community. "I know that when one person helps, other people are likely to join in," said Carter. "If each of us does just one small thing, then this world will clearly be a much better place for us all."

### **Michaella, age 14, Colorado**

Michaella was honored for her leadership role in creating the Exceptional Rodeo for children with disabilities. She and her local 4-H Club raised over \$2,000 to fund the rodeo, which included “bucking” broncos (made of hay and barrels), calf roping, and stick horse barrel racing. As a result of Michaella’s accomplishments, thirty-five local children with physical and developmental disabilities were able to experience the thrill of rodeo. “Children can come out of the darkness with just one special thing you do for them,” explains Michaella. “Just that one thing can change that person’s life forever.” Additionally, Michaella has created the Foal Adoption Program, placing unwanted horses with local 4-H kids.

### **Tenise, age 18, Colorado**

Tenise received the prize for her role as president of L.I.F.E. (Love is Finding Everyone), a Colorado Springs teen service group. As the group’s leader, Tenise organized dances and step shows to fund an impressive number of community service projects. She rallied L.I.F.E.’s members to provide Christmas packages to over 250 students and families in need, spearheaded a local AIDS Awareness and Education program, organized fundraising for a woman in need of surgery, and created Easter baskets for children in the hospital. “I have learned that this world can sometimes be very cruel,” says Tenise. “But it’s the handful of people that care and act, as well as the feeling you get when you know that you have helped others, that makes living in this crazy world worthwhile.”

### **Michael, age 13, Colorado**

Michael organized a bowl-a-thon that raised over \$9,000 to help 13-year-old burn victim Stephanie LeBlanc. Stephanie was severely burned over nearly a third of her body. After hearing Stephanie’s story on the local news, Michael, a veteran fundraiser who has raised over \$120,000 for various causes, decided he had to help offset her medical expenses. Michael visited each homeroom in his middle school, encouraging his peers to make a difference in someone else’s life by participating in the bowl-a-thon. More than 80 students showed up to help raise the funds that made a tremendous difference to Stephanie’s family, who did not have medical insurance. Michael says of his fundraising efforts, “I like showing others that everyone can make a difference, no matter who you are, how old you are, or even what you look like.”

### **Julia, age 12, Colorado**

Julia received the Barron Prize for *Showers to Go!*, a program she started that provides personal care products for needy community members. Julia learned at school that personal hygiene is one of many challenges faced by the homeless. The next day, Julia took the contents of her piggy bank to her teacher, asking that she give the money to a homeless person in need. Instead, her teacher challenged Julia to think of ways she could help more than one person. *Showers to Go!* was born. Julia rallied her classmates to donate shampoo, soap, and other personal care products to fill over 80 cloth bags she and

her friends sewed. Migrant workers in a nearby community benefited from Julia's inspiration. "I learned that even a twelve-year-old can make a difference in the community and improve people's lives," says Julia.

### **Mark, age 11, Colorado**

Mark organized a jump rope skip-a-thon to raise money for Skylar Stanley, a baby from nearby Fort Morgan in need of a heart transplant. Skylar's need hit close to home: Mark's grandmother had died waiting for a liver transplant and his mother was in need of a kidney transplant. Mark organized "Skipping for Skylar," where local kids collected pledges and then jumped rope at the school gym on a Saturday morning. Mark publicized his event, set up a bank account for donations, and convinced local businesses to donate refreshments and prizes. Mark raised \$1,100 for Skylar, who received her transplant and is now a healthy toddler. "I did this project because in my heart, I felt it was the right thing to do," says Mark.

### **Adam, age 16, Colorado**

Adam incorporates his message of breast cancer awareness into the dynamic magic shows he performs, free of charge, for schoolchildren and teachers in Denver. In the seven years since Adam learned his first magic trick, two of his aunts have survived hard-fought battles with breast cancer. Inspired by them, Adam is committed to teaching his audiences about cancer and the benefits of early detection. His shows and message have inspired more than a few teachers to schedule mammograms or begin monthly self exams. "I have learned that by helping other people, you feel better about yourself," says Adam.