

2005 Barron Prize Winners and Honorees

E = environmental project

WINNERS

Lindsey, age 18, Missouri (E)

Lindsey founded Gardening for Families as a way to donate her garden's abundance of produce to families in need. Lindsey's bountiful garden is the result of a water-saving drip irrigation device she invented. An avid gardener and long-time Girl Scout, Lindsey has fine-tuned her device over the past several years, developing it into Lindsey's Nutrient Delivery System (L.N.D.S.). The system delivers vital nutrients to plants' roots with a 50% reduction in water, while doubling crop growth. Lindsey's use of her system has resulted in 40,000 pounds of surplus vegetables, which she has delivered to local food pantries and needy families. Lindsey funds her project through donations from seed and fertilizer companies, and by selling vegetables from a driveway stand. Her work has inspired other farmers to adopt her watering system and to donate their surplus produce, too. "When people see a young person like myself reaching out to help someone else, it seems to take on special meaning for them," says Lindsey. "I've realized I can make a difference in people's lives, and that everyone can have a major positive impact on the future."

Additional media coverage:

Weekly Reader's *Current Science*, February 10, 2006

National Public Radio's *Living on Earth*, November 2005

Kansas City Star, October 16, 2005

Geneva, age 16, New York

Geneva created a non-profit youth service organization called Bring It On! to promote community service, leadership development, and civic engagement in the northeast Bronx. As Executive Director of the youth-run group, Geneva directs its fundraising and has received grants from Youth Venture, Girls Inc., and Citizens for New York City. She also supervises five youth coordinators who organize events such as environmental clean-ups along the Bronx River, youth jams, entrepreneurship activities, and her You Go Girl Go program for at-risk girls. This program connects girls with positive female role models, and has given 250 young women the chance to see choices beyond teen pregnancy (the norm for generations in Geneva's family) and illegal street activities (prevalent in her neighborhood). "I've learned I have something to offer," says Geneva, "and that I can make a difference in my school, community, church, and world." She adds, "I'm a better person for having started Bring It On!, and at the age of sixteen, I'm ready for the world."

Beth, age 18, California (E)

Beth founded the Arcata High School Conservation and Renewable Energy project (C.A.R.E.), which has received large-scale grants to conduct solar energy research. Beth's group wrote and received grants to install a \$20,000 solar array at Arcata High, and has conducted research that demonstrates the efficiency of the solar panels in her cloudy coastal town. C.A.R.E. also wrote and received a \$10,000 grant from British Petroleum to install and test the efficiency of a solar water heater at the school, and

has replaced all of the school's incandescent light fixtures with more energy-efficient ones. The group has organized energy-saving presentations at the local elementary school, and is helping a number of high schools with their renewable energy activities. Beth has taken her passion to the California state legislature, speaking at Senate hearings in support of the Million Solar Roofs Initiative, and across the country, participating in renewable energy summits in Washington, D.C. "For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to change the world," says Beth. "Finally, I've found a place where I am needed, a place where I can lead and truly shake things up for a worthy cause."

Additional media coverage:

www.myhero.com, March 15, 2006

Ana, age 13, Colorado

Ana founded Peruvian Hearts (www.PeruvianHearts.com), a non-profit organization that provides education, food, clothing, and other resources to girls in a remote Peruvian orphanage. Ana, adopted as a baby from Peru, conceived of Peruvian Hearts two years ago, following a trip back to her homeland. While there, she visited a small orphanage for girls in the hills outside the town where she was born, and was struck by the girls' lack of adequate food, clothing, and education. "I realized they needed more than just story books and teddy bears," explained Ana. Moved and inspired, Ana returned to the U.S. determined to help. She immediately began collecting school supplies at her middle school, and set up pen-pal correspondence between the Peruvian girls and her Spanish class. Since then, Ana has gained non-profit status for Peruvian Hearts and has raised \$15,000 to provide school tuition, uniforms, and backpacks for the girls, along with three meals each day, vitamins, and warm clothing. Peruvian Hearts has also supplied the orphanage with a loom for making blankets, a candle-making stove, and a chicken coop and chickens – all means of sustainability. Ana is in the process of forming a Peruvian Hearts club at her school so as to encourage others to get involved. "One of my goals is to inspire other kids to reach out and help others less fortunate than themselves," says Ana. "I believe each person can change the world a little bit at a time."

Additional media coverage:

National Geographic Kids, February 2007

American Girl magazine, October 2006

Weekly Reader's *Senior Edition*, December 2, 2005

Metro Denver *Kids' Pages*, November 2005

Clayton, age 16, Texas

Clayton is in his sixth year of organizing Clayton's Backyard Crew, a group that has refurbished over 700 bicycles to give as Christmas gifts to children whose parents are in prison. Clayton began his project as a fifth-grader, when he saw two bikes being thrown away that he thought other kids might enjoy. He fixed up the bikes, gave them to two delighted kids, and realized that many other children would likely enjoy a refurbished bike, too. He put out the call for "gently used" bikes, recruited a handful of his friends, and was able to refurbish 25 bikes to give as gifts that first year. Since then, he has given away at least 100 bikes each year at Christmas, delighting both children and their incarcerated parents. He has also solicited companies for donations of a helmet and lock to accompany each bike. "I have learned that the majority of people in the world have hearts as big as Texas," says Clayton. "We are all good people when given the opportunity to help one another."

Additional media coverage:

New York Times Upfront, February 20, 2006

Weekly Reader's *Know Your World Extra*, December 9, 2005

Ebunoluwa (Ebbie), age 13, Pennsylvania (E)

Ebbie organized a group of Canal Kids to monitor the water quality in the historic Delaware Canal that runs through her hometown. During a visit to the Canal two years ago, Ebbie was dismayed to find it vandalized and polluted. She was also frustrated to learn the Canal was no longer listed as a National Historic Park. She decided to conduct water and soil quality tests along the canal, with the hope of improving its environmental health and convincing policy makers that it could again be a source of recreation and tourism. Ebbie rallied sixth-graders to help with the water and soil testing, and then compared their findings to data collected by other students in previous years. Ebbie determined that increasing the water flow in the Canal would improve its health, as well as its recreational potential, and compiled a Power Point presentation about her research and recommendation. She and the Canal Kids took their presentation to the state capital and convinced policymakers to increase water flow in the Canal. "In a matter of two years, I have gained a new perspective on life, respect for our environment, and a new sense of security about who I am," says Ebbie.

Additional media coverage:

Weekly Reader's *Current Science*, April 21, 2006

Claire, age 18, Oklahoma

Claire created a domestic violence prevention program in the Choctaw Nation schools to teach elementary students non-violent ways to handle their emotions. Claire's project, called Project Falummichechi (meaning "to reclaim" in the Choctaw language), trains high school mentors to teach second-graders that "hitting isn't cool." Two years ago, Claire, who is part Choctaw, was distressed to learn of the prevalence of domestic violence in communities within the Choctaw Nation, and began envisioning a program for young children that would address the problem. Though greeted with skepticism and discouragement by many of the professionals she first contacted, Claire found support from tribal leaders. She took her idea to school administrators in the rural area, and was thrilled when five of the six school systems there embraced it. She then met with educators and health department officials, compiled curriculum, and recruited 48 teen mentors, whom Claire brought together in the fall for a weekend training retreat. These mentors spent the rest of the school year in second-grade classrooms, using skits, games, and activities to deliver their message of non-violence. Claire's program has already doubled in size, expanding to ten schools in its second year. "I've learned that it takes unbelievable time and perseverance to achieve your dreams," says Claire, "I've also learned that though the work of volunteering is never-ending, the payback is huge."

Additional media coverage:

The Oklahoman, November 14, 2005

Washo, age 14, Oregon (E)

Washo has led a group of students in greatly improving the quality of life for primates at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center. Since a very young age, Washo has rescued and studied dozens of animals, and has watched protestors outside the Primate Center near his home. Determined to help the monkeys there, Washo started a Roots and Shoots club (a program begun by Dr. Jane Goodall to support students in helping animals and the environment), with the goal of improving living conditions for the monkeys at the Center. Washo arranged a meeting with the director of the Center (something many adults before him had failed to do), and obtained permission for his Roots and Shoots club to create enrichment toys for the animals. Since then, Washo and his group have been invited on-site to continue their work, making ladders and interactive toys for the monkeys, as well as transplanting bamboo plants into containers near their enclosures. Other facilities in the state have heard of Washo's work, including the Oregon Zoo, which recently asked for his help with their chimpanzee exhibit. "This experience has taught me not to give up on something I believe in just because of my age or because I am only one person," explains Washo. "Seeing what we're accomplishing makes me realize that if you just get involved, you can change the world."

Leah, age 18, Florida

Leah founded smARTies, a non-profit organization that provides weekly art classes to elementary students in the Little Havana section of Miami. Leah conceived of smARTies three years ago, when she learned of cuts in funding for arts education in the Miami-Dade County Public School system. A passionate proponent of using art to teach tolerance and understanding, Leah outlined a program for the school system that would do just that. She took her idea to school administrators and teachers, and convinced the Miami-Dade County School Board, legal department, and risk-management division of its merit. When she finally received the go-ahead, Leah recruited twenty of her peers to help prepare and teach the weekly classes, and asked local businesses to donate art supplies. Her well-received program has been given pilot program status by the school system so that it can continue. "In the process of creating smARTies, I have grown as an artist, educator, speaker, and member of my community," explains Leah. "I have also learned I have what it takes to realize a dream."

Shannon, age 17, Utah (E)

Shannon has tackled the problems of invasive non-native species and poor water quality in the desert and rivers near her community. As a volunteer for the past seven years at nearby Timpanogos National Monument, Shannon has watched native plant populations decline and invasive species spread. Concerned about the problem, Shannon recruited several of her 4-H friends to do something about it. The group received a \$600 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Society through a program called Girls for Planet Earth. The group removed non-native species, collected seeds from native plants, and grew seedlings in a greenhouse. They also organized volunteers to transplant the native seedlings in a meadow at the national monument. Shannon has also tackled the problem of water quality in the rivers flowing into and out of Utah Lake. She has spent the past four years collecting data on water quality markers such as dissolved oxygen, nitrate, phosphorous, and pH. As a result of her research, Shannon determined that people were largely the cause of the poor water quality. After presenting her research to the state's Water Quality Board, she began an intensive education initiative that has reached 1,600 individuals so far. "I feel it's important to teach school-aged children about water conservation," says Shannon. "They are the ones who will be responsible for keeping it clean in the future."

Additional media coverage:

Deseret Morning News, October 25, 2005

Honorees

Alexandra, age 18, New York: Started the group “Knit for New York” whose members knit and deliver patchwork blankets to the homeless in New York City.

Alexandra (Allie), age 13, California: Founded “Save Our Species” (S.O.S.), a Roots and Shoots group determined to help save the endangered island fox.

Bilaal, age 9, Ontario, Canada: Raised thousands of dollars to help hurricane, tsunami, and HIV victims all over the world. With an appeal to Canadian corporations, he raised \$350,000 worth of prescription medicine and collected 2,000 cases of baby food for hurricane victims in Haiti.

Brittany, age 15, Florida: Created the “Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program” as a way to recycle fishing line and educate others about its hazards to marine life.

Daniel, age 18, Pennsylvania: Created “Teen Zone,” an online newspaper written for teens and by teens in order to build community across socio-economic barriers, and to empower teens through writing and free expression.

Desmond, age 14, Florida: Leads a number of service activities at his school: tutors and mentors special education students, captains the Safety Patrol, and is caretaker of the school garden and farmyard.

Emily, age 16, Massachusetts: “Kingston Kids Care” – helping the elderly in her community. Provides small Christmas gift for Meals on Wheels recipients, a Pharmacy Assistance program, teen visits, and more.

Gina, age 17, New York: “Kids Performing Who Kare,” a theater group for children that raises money for the Cancer Center for Kids at Winthrop University Hospital. She has raised over \$65,000.

Jami, age 16, Nebraska: Created an educational game based on “Hollywood Squares” to educate adults and students about the importance of protecting our water supply.

Jeffrey, age 18, California: Volunteers as a translator and caseworker for Chinese immigrants. Also mediates disputes and assists immigrants with traffic, landlord, and domestic violence concerns.

Kyle, age 16, Florida: Founded “Kids that Care,” a student-run organization whose mission is to improve the lives of children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Raised \$150,000.

Lacey, age 18, Colorado: Organized a Diversity Week to celebrate religious, ethnic, and cultural differences at her conservative, largely Caucasian high school. 800 students participated.

Michael, age 17, New Jersey: Created “Students Advocating Medical Equality” (S.A.M.E.), a non-profit group that helps distribute prescription medications to patients who are uninsured or cannot afford them.

Virginia, age 18, Kentucky: Led a peer mentoring program that pairs American high school students with teenagers entering the U.S. as refugees. Has helped more than 800 teens and their families, providing tutoring, companionship, and assistance in finding housing and other resources.

Welland, age 17, South Carolina: Launched a project, “Suitcases for Kids” which provides dignity and self respect for foster children through the gift of a suitcase, along with a stuffed animal and personal note. Currently has chapters in all 50 states and in 83 countries.