



THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

Honoring Outstanding Community Service by Young Americans

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEXAS' TOP YOUTH VOLUNTEERS SELECTED IN 21st ANNUAL NATIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM

**Dallas student earns \$1,000 award,
engraved medallions and trip to nation's capital**

**Honors also bestowed on youth volunteers in Humble, Somerset,
Manvel, Tyler, El Paso, Cypress, Sugar Land, Texarkana and Austin**

AUSTIN, Texas – Ariana Luterman, 16, of Dallas today was named Texas' top youth volunteer of 2016 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Ariana was nominated by Greenhill School in Addison. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, now in its 21st year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Ariana, a sophomore at Greenhill School, has combined her passion for competitive triathlon racing with her desire to help homeless children through her Team Ariana, which has raised more than \$80,000 to benefit a local childcare center that provides free early development services for homeless children. Ariana said her life changed the first time she saw a homeless child when she was 8 years old. "It awakened my heart to the reality that all kids did not have a home, a bed, or even a special pillow to call their own," she said. She began volunteering at the Vogel Alcove childcare center, reading to children, supervising arts and crafts projects, and requesting that instead of gifts, her birthday guests bring donations to benefit homeless children. At the same time, Ariana said, her triathlon performances were beginning to attract attention. It occurred to her that maybe there was a way to help homeless children through her racing.

So in 2011, she spoke with her parents about forming Team Ariana. Her idea was to use her name recognition to attract corporate sponsorships and bring awareness to the growing problem of homeless children.

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She spent months developing strategies and meeting with companies to solicit support. Once she had a clothing sponsor, she designed a line of Team Ariana racewear and created an online store so that other athletes could support her cause with their purchases. She also sold corporate logo placements on her personal race gear and her clothing line to generate funds for Vogel Alcove, and donated her winnings from races. In addition, she began speaking in front of groups about the issue of child homelessness in this country. "If I can change the course of one child's life, I have proven I am a real champion," Ariana said. www.teamariana.org.

As State Honoree, Ariana will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where she will join the top honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for four days of national recognition events. During the trip, 10 students will be named America's top youth volunteers of 2016.