



**PRESS ADVISORY.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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Young Workers Honored for Their Work, Commitment and Dedication to Summer Programs Mayor Ballard to Speak at the Excellence in Summer Service Education Award Ceremony

What: Excellence In Summer Service Education Award Ceremony
When: Thursday, September 3, 2009, 2009; 6:00pm
Where: Indianapolis Art Center, 820 East 67th Street

Indianapolis, IN—On Thursday, September 3rd at 6:00pm at the Indianapolis Art Center, the Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY) and the partners of the Summer Youth Program Fund will honor 22 local young people with the Excellence in Summer Service Education Award. Mayor Greg Ballard will speak at the ceremony honoring the work, commitment, and service young people provide our community as full-time staff or volunteers in Marion County summer youth programs.

“Beyond providing a positive atmosphere and encouraging growth and maturity, these activities can also help prevent crime among our young people by engaging them in meaningful programs that can lead to a brighter future,” said Mayor Ballard.

Young people who work in summer programs serve as positive role models for their peers and campers alike. They demonstrate a committed work ethic, compassion and sensitivity to the needs of others. Often working long hours, they make a difference in their program, neighborhoods and community. Whether as camp counselors, program managers, lifeguards or educational staff, many summer programs would not exist without their dedication and sacrifice.

The summer programs where these young people work offer children a safe and healthy place to spend their days. There they have the time to investigate topics more deeply, participate in hands-on projects and develop caring relationships with the youth staff.

“Thanks to these young men and women, thousands of Indianapolis children had positive and productive experiences in summer camps and programs across our community. They helped keep children safe, taught their campers new skills, and provided countless opportunities for learning and development. This award recognizes the tremendous contribution each made to our community,” said John Brandon, MCCOY President.

Besides teaching lessons to children, the award winners learned quite a few lessons as well, according to Brandon. “Many of them learned how to be flexible, creative, and responsive to the many needs that children in their programs presented. They also learned that youth work is hard work but work that is worthwhile and valuable to our community.”

Award winner Sarah Siertle, a senior at Chatard High School, has learned just how much her efforts mean to the children she serves as a volunteer at Art With a Heart, “I truly value giving children the love and encouragement they need to grow up to be great people, and I see a star in all of them. Through Art With a Heart, I have seen the phrase “Actions speak louder than words” come to life, and it has become extremely important to me. It is important to show the children in the camp that each one of them is unique and absolutely incredible, and that they really make a difference.”

Fifty-five young workers from 25 different summer programs submitted applications for the Excellence in Summer Service Education Award. At the awards ceremony, the 22 winners will receive a certificate of recognition and \$1000 to be used for education-related expenses such as buying books or equipment, paying tuition, or making a deposit in an educational savings account.

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The 2009 Excellence in Summer Service Education Award winners are:

Brittany Bryant, 19, Camp Coach at Ebenezer Retreat & Camping Institute
Elizabeth Buck, 21, Summer Staff at CampAbility at Easter Seals Crossroads
Julian Edwards, 20, Camp Counselor at Edna Martin Christian Center
Danny Englehardt, 22, Program Coordinator at East 10th United Methodist Youth Center
Kathleen Flannery, 21, Counselor at CYO Camp Rancho Framasa
Ismael Garcia, 21, Leader at La Plaza
Kailee Grabbe, 21, Lead Instructor at National Junior Tennis League
Jasmine Graham, 18, Assistant Supervisor at the Indianapolis Algebra Project
Lindsay Hearn, 22, Intern at Young Audiences
Kayree Horn, 21, Camp Counselor at Redeemer Hospitality Mission's Son Seekers Day Camp
Katie Johnstone, 21, Camp Counselor at CampAbility at Easter Seals Crossroads
Keisha Merriweather, 17, Math Tutor at the Indianapolis Algebra Project
Casey Mitscher, 22, Intern at Fletcher Place Community Center
Laquita Pickett, 20, Camp Counselor at Flanner House
Hallie Robbins, 19, Camp Counselor at Concord Community Center
Aamber Shake, 17, Small Group Program Coordinator at LeGore Boys & Girls Club
Sarah Siertle, 17, Junior Board President and Classroom Mentor at Art With a Heart
Robbie Steiner, 21, Counselor at CYO Camp Rancho Framasa
Alexandria Stewart, 18, Intern at Indiana Dyslexia Institute's Camp Delafield
Davone Williamson, 18, Counselor at St. Florian Leadership Center
Alexandria Wysinger, 16, Camp Coach at Ebenezer Retreat & Camping Institute
Christina Zier, 20, Head Counselor and Camp Director's Assistant at Flanner House

MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth) is the youth services intermediary for central Indiana whose mission is to champion the positive development of youth through leadership on key issues and support of the youth worker community. MCCOY's vision is that every young person in central Indiana has opportunities to thrive, learn, engage and contribute.

The Summer Youth Program Fund is a partnership of 11 area grant-making bodies. It seasonally funds local nonprofits that provide much-needed safe, engaging summer fun to thousands of Marion County youth - like recreation, camping, arts, academics, college and job readiness, and cultural enrichment.

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