

That's the (Community) Spirit!

Fifty-two middle- and high-school students were honored with Community Spirit Awards on May 22. The students were recognized for citizenship, initiative, and leadership. They received medals and were guests of honor at a luncheon with family members and school and community leaders.

Their accomplishments include volunteer work at area churches and with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, raising money for charitable causes, neighborhood cleanups, and leadership roles in a variety of after-school activities. The Middle and High School Community Spirit Award winners are:

An Achievable Dream Middle School

Known as "Mr. Character," Reginald Brown is active in his church and helps his grandfather with services. He tutors students after school and volunteers at a community center.

Thomas Wright, president of the middle-school SCA, headed its food drive, which provided holiday dinners to more than 15 families. He also raises money for the Leukemia Foundation.

As a junior member of the Interact Club, Aaliyah Johnson helped with food and toy drives and served dinners to others in need. She also collected personal-care items for senior citizens.

Crittenden Middle School

Logan Luther is a member of Boy Scout Troop 915 and serves as troop chaplain. Logan recently helped re-roof a house with the Scouts. He also spends time visiting the elderly in nursing homes.

Shaun Stroble is a member of Gethsemane Baptist Church and helps with its children's ministry. He is a member of the Broken Silence Step Team and helped organize an Easter-Egg hunt in the East End community.

Lee Shrader doesn't hesitate to make a right choice, even if the decision is not popular. He is a member of the Student Advisory Committee and serves as student executive producer of the morning announcements show.

Dozier Middle School

Alexis Alston participates in the Relay for Life, Kids Involved in Community Kindness (KICK), National Junior Honor Society, AKArana, and SAGE, the Student Advisory Group on Education.

Devon Butterfield is a member of SAGE and attended the People to People World Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. Devon is a first-degree black belt in tae kwan do. He plans to volunteer at Riverside Medical Center this summer.

Rose Persinger is a Student Council Association representative and a member of the principal's advisory committee. Rose likes to help organize special events, including charity fund-raisers. She enjoys praise dancing with her church group.

Gildersleeve Middle School

Camelia Hahn helps others in the classroom and shows respect towards everyone. She is trustworthy and honors her commitments, which include volunteering at the Virginia Living Museum and for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Trained as a peer mediator, Chanmi Yang is always willing to help. When she traveled with her family to Hawaii and China on a mission trip, she volunteered at an adult day-care center, where she helped senior citizens make arts and crafts.

Alexandra Bass works well with others and always has a smile to share. She supports her community by volunteering at the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia, Northampton Convalescent Center, and the nursery at her church.

Hines Middle School

Kaitlin McHale is known at Hines for her mature compassion. Kaitlin is quick to assess a situation and even quicker to offer help to other students and teachers. She even helps the cafeteria monitors without being asked.

David Garrett has distinguished himself in his first year at Hines. He welcomes other newcomers, introducing them to teachers and showing them around the school. He tries to make sure everyone feels at home.

Teyonna Toppin has participated in all of her English class' service learning activities this year. She wears a permanent smile and leads by example. She participates in Volunteer Club activities at Hines, where she is considered a model citizen.

Huntington Middle School

Elana Turczynski donated her hair to the Ponytail Kids Club for children with cancer. She volunteers with the Channel 18 TV Production and is in the drama club and on an Odyssey of the Mind Team. She also attends Hebrew School.

Aja Bradley attended the Youth Leadership Conference this year in Washington, D.C. She has helped with Wal-Mart Community Day, collected clothing for less-fortunate members of the community, and participated in Odyssey of the Mind.

Tyrell Jacobs is a member of the Omega Institute Club, a male mentoring program. Tyrell volunteers to help his family and senior-citizen neighbors and helps out at the public library by cleaning it up and re-shelving books.

Passage Middle School

Keeara Carter has participated in drama and the Homework Club and stays after school regularly to lend a hand – or an ear – to other students. She helps with the KICK program, babysits, and is very active in her church.

Katlyn Gootee is an accomplished musician and helps with the daily news show at the school by anchoring and producing the show. Katlyn is active in her Girl Scout troop outside of school and volunteers to keep her church clean.

Charmayne Clark is an accomplished musician and volunteers at an animal shelter. She has participated in the Battle of the Books and the Math*A*Thon to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Reservoir Middle School

Mariah Alling is involved with the Girl Scouts and Lebanon Christian Church, where she is active in the youth group. She has taken part in fundraisers and 5K walks for Mothers Against Drunk Driving and collected canned goods for needy people.

Mikea Reid is team manager for the school basketball team and tutors other students in math and science. She is a member of SAGE and helped collect and distribute clothing for adults and girls for job interviews.

With a cello or a calculator in hand, in front of a church or students, Taylor Mebane can be found helping others. She plays piano and cello for Zion Prospect Church's band and tutors students. She is a member of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra.

Washington Middle School

Mahad Daara is polite and respectful toward others. He is a considerate young man, and he demonstrates that by making time in his schedule to take out the trash for the elderly in his neighborhood.

Casey Leser is passionate about the environment. She participates in outdoor weekend events at school and serves as a guide in the Aquatics Lab at open houses. She plays basketball, participates in her church bell choir, and helps care for the homeless.

Latrell Holland has served in the Student Council Association at Booker T. for three years as an officer and classroom representative. He has served his church, First Baptist Denbigh, as an usher and has volunteered to feed the homeless.

An Achievable Dream High School

Kristal Bolden has volunteered at Newsome Park Elementary for two years, working in the library and helping the staff with Technology, Math and Science Night. Kristal also assisted with a school safety program and child care for parent and teacher nights and she helped set up a science station at the school.

For the past four years, Jeshon Copeland has volunteered at a day-care center. As an active member of the Interact Club, Jeshon volunteered at the Hilton Village marathon and he assisted the Salvation Army with food donations. He is a tutor, and he volunteers at Newsome Park, where he assists with special events and library duty.

Sarah White is active in school and community activities. Sarah has collected toiletries for homeless citizens, and during the winter holidays she wrapped books for younger students to give to their siblings. She also helped make holiday decorations for the school dining facility, in addition to helping decorate a community nursing home.

Denbigh High School

Emi Akiode has shown great leadership and compassion this year as head of Denbigh's Relay for Life Committee. She has been instrumental in organizing several functions that enabled the National Honor Society to raise thousands of dollars to support the American Cancer Society.

Hannah Devereux has volunteered more than 500 hours at the Virginia Living Museum in various capacities. Hannah volunteers at school by assisting with open houses, and she was instrumental in helping the Aviation Academy host a two-hour live report on WTKR News Channel 3 last fall.

Azaria Hockstedler is president of the science-ecology club and is active in school events. She planned several campus cleanup efforts, and encouraged other students to get involved. Azaria is now making birdhouses and she is laying out a plan to identify plants on campus to provide a nature walk for students. She is active in the Key Club.

Brock Wagner mentors children at church after school and teaches Sunday school. Last summer, Brock worked as a Vacation Bible School instructor. He also served as the youth representative at his church. Brock helps at a senior living center, and has served as a volunteer for canned food drives and the Feed 2000 campaign.

Heritage High School

Tiffany Banks' dedicated leadership is evident at Heritage. As vice president of the Future Business Leaders of America, Tiffany guided service projects to collect money for the March of Dimes. She also was instrumental in organizing help for the Salvation Army.

Tara McKee is co-president of STARS, a club that encourages young women to become involved in science activities. Under her leadership, STARS raised money for the Food Bank and mentored middle-school students. Tara coordinated a tea where members of the organization invited teacher who had made a difference in their lives.

Leanna Tucker is president of the Crossbearers Club, and is the new editor of the school newspaper. Always willing to assist, Leanna has wrapped presents for children in need and has volunteered as a server in food kitchens. She is active in church programs to help people in the community.

Demetirus White exhibits traits other students should model. He volunteered at the Youth Career Café and he has helped to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Fund. Demetirus has also supported the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters by assisting with a clothing drive.

Menchville High School

As a member of the Spanish Honor Society, Ariel Brown packed shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child and made cards for the less fortunate almost every holiday. Ariel has helped plan homecoming, the senior breakfast, and an annual blood drive. She also volunteers with her church at soup kitchens and tutors at elementary schools.

Kaitie Castagna has volunteered for Special Olympics and Santa House with the Keyettes. With the National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society, Kaitie has made cards for veterans, hospitalized children, and others. She is a Girl Scout, a volunteer at a local senior community and serves at church and as a volunteer EMT.

Allison Maliniak is active in community and church activities. She is a dedicated volunteer at Riverside Hospital. Allison also sets aside time to assist at the Food Bank, where she participates in the Food For Kids Backpack program. This summer, Allison will participate in mission work in New York.

As president of the Entrepreneur and Inventor's Club, Dominique Taylor has helped to raise money for food for needy children in the Philippines. As vice president of the Young Men and Women of Distinction, Dominique has worked with the school's canned food drive. She serves as president of the police chief's student advisory board.

Point Option

Kaylyn Anderson volunteers for Relay for Life. She also helps at the SPCA. As a member of the student leadership council, Kaylyn assisted with organizing Mothers Against Drunk Driving presentations at New Horizons. As a testament to her commitment, Kaylyn has completed over 50 hours of community service.

Ericka Seward is president of the Key Club. In this role, and as a member of the leadership council, she has organized the recycling and environmental club. Ericka also serves as a volunteer for International Ministries and she has participated in many fundraisers for Kiwanis Club activities.

Warwick High School

As president of the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, Melissa Borraro spearheaded drives to raise money for leukemia and collect toys for the Toys for Tots program. As a student leader, Melissa has served as a guide and friend to incoming ninth-graders. She also is active in "Word on the Street," video newscasts.

Mario Lawrence actively promotes school spirit. Displaying great leadership, he serves as the producer and director of the "Word on the Street" newscast. In addition to his activities at school, Mario heads the media program at his church and pitches in to help his neighbors with yard work.

Tyla Morris is a member of the Word on the Street crew, the forensics and debate team, and the volleyball team. She is credited with grabbing and holding the students' attention as she delivers the announcements. Tyla is also active in the youth ministry at her church.

Scott Stuard is student president of the PTSA and is an active member of seven other clubs. He has helped plan After Prom and several fundraisers. Scott is an Eagle Scout and a member of the youth group at his church, where he has helped feed the less fortunate. He also participated in missions to migrant camps on the Eastern Shore.

Woodside High School

Curtis Bethany enjoys helping others. His community service includes working with Habitat for Humanity, Project Inclusion, and the Boys and Girls Club. He has stocked food supplies for the Salvation Army, and he has raised money for the March of Dimes Charity Walk.

As president of the National Honor Society, Jerry Bui has led many service projects. He organized a blood drive and served as co-chair of the Relay for Life Walkathon at Woodside. Jerry organized a holiday caroling party at a retirement center and he organized a prom for seniors. He is a member of the Mayor's Youth Commission.

Walker Griffea is a supporter of the ninth-grade transition program, and recently presented the topic at the VHSL leadership conference. He helped set up an action plan for the Fort Eustis Youth Center and helped organize a Youth Over Violence March. Walker also helped collect more than 100 pairs of jeans for homeless and needy citizens.

Heather Holston is an active member of the Key Club. Her service projects have included the Turkey Drop for families of soldiers stationed at Fort Eustis and raising money for Relay for Life. She has assembled goody bags for nursing-home residents. During the summer, Heather volunteers for the American Cancer Society.