

MARCH OF DIMES ANNOUNCES 2009 TEAM YOUTH AWARD WINNERS

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y., OCTOBER 26, 2009 – This year’s Team Youth awards are presented to a number of devoted individuals and extraordinary councils that have carried out the March of Dimes mission in their local communities. They have succeeded in educating and involving others to become active in our nationwide commitment to promote the birth of healthy babies. These awards are presented to those who have been involved with Chain Reaction, Collegiate Council, Youth on Board, Youth of Public Affairs, National Youth Service Organizations, and individual volunteers who further the March of Dimes mission.

The recipient of the March of Dimes Team Youth ***Outstanding Youth on Board Award*** is Sarah Collica, a senior at Central Michigan University who is also the co-chair of the Michigan Youth Communications Council and a member of the Michigan Chapter Board. Sarah is an active member in her community and an inspiration to many as she strives to fight for a better place for our nation’s babies.

Lauren Stephens of Columbus, OH and Chris Schiavo of Missouri are the recipients of the March of Dimes Team Youth ***Outstanding Chapter Youth Award***. Both students exhibit great dedication and are strong leaders who have been active in volunteer activities and March of Dimes events. Lauren, a member of the Ohio Chapter, was one of five students selected to attend the March of Dimes Youth Conference in Atlanta last year. She created the MOD.youth.motivation site on Facebook, which reaches out to other youth and allows them to share their volunteer experiences. Chris is a committed student from Missouri who has been involved with the March of Dimes Chain Reaction for a number of years. He started the MOD Squad club in his high school which is comprised of fifty members and has brought a greater awareness to his community about the problem of prematurity.

The March of Dimes Team Youth ***Outstanding Volunteer Advisor Award*** is presented to Shelly Piechotte of the Marysville Middle School March for Babies Team in Michigan. Shelly is enthusiastic and an inspiration to all of her students. She has succeeded in involving them in the school’s March for Babies events and has organized many fundraising events throughout the past ten years that have motivated others to get involved. Shelly’s youth team in Port Huron raised \$11,005 making it the #1 School Team in the state.

Cherie Sussman is the recipient of March of Dimes Team Youth ***Outstanding Staff Advisor Award***. She serves as the Staff Advisor for the Gainesville Chapter and is supportive, committed, and extraordinary as a mentor to the students. Cherie is a leader and an inspiration to affiliates of the Chain Reaction and knows that it is in the hands of our nation's youth to continue the fight against prematurity.

Winning the March of Dimes Team Youth ***Mission Triangle Award*** is the Gainesville Chain Reaction Youth Leadership Council. This council has striven to see the day when babies are born healthy and have taken many steps to reach their goal. The introduction of the 1st Annual Rattle Battle Wing Bowl raised over \$7,000 in one night. The council also participated in fundraising efforts for March for Babies and succeeded in gaining the attention of the whole city through the use of media services.

The March of Dimes Team Youth ***Mission Education Award*** is presented to the University of Iowa Collegiate Council for their participation in Prematurity Awareness Month.. The council set up an amazing event in 2008 where they gathered signatures for the Petition for Preemies and distributed health information for youth and information about the March of Dimes, inviting local mission families and media to be part of the event.

The March of Dimes Team Youth ***Fund Raising Award*** is presented to the Gainesville Florida Chain Reaction Youth Leadership Council, which is composed of great individuals who raise awareness through fundraising. The Leadership Council has done an incredible job fundraising for their chapter by rallying the schools and the community to raise \$67,000. This achievement was made possible through events such as bake sales and rock contests, asking friends to substitute birthday gifts with donations, and handing over entire paychecks to the March of Dimes.

The March of Dimes Team Youth ***Advocacy Award*** is presented to the Central Ohio Chain Reaction for their enthusiasm and attendance at the Ohio State Lobby Day on March 13, 2009 where they witnessed advocacy in action and were motivated to become politically active on behalf of the March of Dimes. Students became more involved in public affairs during the 2009-2010 school year and have been a great benefit to the organization as they lobby for issues effecting babies and mothers.

The innovative Michigan Youth Council is awarded the March of Dimes Team Youth ***Communications Award*** due to their strengths as a team in actively communicating with other volunteers across the state

through the use of message boards, networking sites such as Facebook, brochures, newsletters, and other media.

The March of Dimes Team Youth Recognition Program is designed to recognize the efforts of outstanding youth volunteers throughout the 2008-2009 academic year. The program celebrates youth volunteers and their advisors who excel as March of Dimes volunteers.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com/youth, marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org.

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