

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 5

BY SENATOR CORTEZ

A RESOLUTION

To commend Elijah Evans of Youngsville on being named one of the top two youth volunteers in Louisiana for 2014 in the nineteenth annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

WHEREAS, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program represents the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service; and

WHEREAS, all public and private middle level and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and HandsOn Network affiliates, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award; and

WHEREAS, this prestigious award, presented by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, honors young volunteers across the United States who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to serving their communities; and

WHEREAS, Elijah Evans of Youngsville is a sophomore at Ovey Comeaux High School in Lafayette and works tirelessly in his community to raise awareness of child abuse and to improve the lives of foster children by promoting and hosting an annual Christmas party for children in foster care; and

WHEREAS, Elijah knows from personal experience what it is like to be abused and to be a foster child; and

WHEREAS, when he was two years old, his biological mother placed him in a bathtub full of scalding water that resulted in Elijah being burned from the waist down, and caused him to lose all of the toes on his right foot and the toes on his left foot to become webbed; and

WHEREAS, Elijah spent nearly three years in foster care until he was adopted by one of the nurses who cared for him in the hospital; and

WHEREAS, when he was in the eighth grade, he decided to make people more aware of child abuse and to do something special for children in foster care; and

WHEREAS, a Christmas party for children in foster care became a project that Elijah poured his heart and his time into because he "knew what it was like to not get the gifts you really wanted"; and

WHEREAS, he began raising funds to host the event by sharing his story and his plan with local churches, schools, civic organizations, and the news media, while recruiting volunteers, collecting donations, and selling raffle tickets and T-shirts; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Children and Family Services identified seventy-two foster children to invite to the Christmas party; and

WHEREAS, each child made a Christmas wish list and Elijah shopped for, and purchased, the gifts; and

WHEREAS, the Christmas party became an annual event and Elijah created an organization, "No Use for Abuse", to pursue more initiatives to ensure abused children and foster children "feel wanted and know someone cares for them"; and

WHEREAS, Elijah Evans merits the utmost respect for the exemplary strides he has taken in his pursuit to bring awareness to the tragedy of child abuse and for his tireless dedication to making Christmas possible for so many Louisiana foster children.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Elijah Evans on being named one of the top two youth volunteers in Louisiana for 2014 in the nineteenth annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program and for the tremendous honor and pride that he brings to his family, friends, school, community, and the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Elijah Evans.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE