



college forward

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College-Bound Youth Win International Grant from Disney, Lead Project in Honor of Global Youth Service Day

AUSTIN, Texas — On Saturday, April 26, 2008, from 1-3 p.m., five students from Travis High School will lead approximately 20 elementary school children in a creative community service project at the Ruiz Branch of the Austin Public Library. The project, "Reaching Young, Reaching Old," will be implemented in honor of Global Youth Service Day.

The service project is a creation of Travis High School's Student Leadership Council (SLC), a group of student leaders from College Forward, an after-school college preparatory program that reaches economically disadvantaged high school juniors and seniors. The students developed the project based on community needs they had researched, and were awarded a Disney Minnie Grant to fund their work. Theirs was the only Texas project to receive the international grant.

"Global Youth Service Day is a wonderful opportunity to encourage today's youth to be a part of making our world a better place to live," said Jeff Hoffman, vice president, Disney Worldwide Outreach. "As part of that encouragement, our Minnie Grants help individuals facilitate outreach programs in their communities."

The Student Leadership Council members will lead the younger children in decorating goodie bags for ill children involved with the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation, creating decorations for the elderly population at Odyssey Healthcare, and putting together craft kits for patients at Dell Children's Hospital.

"Our project will instill the idea of service in youth who are not usually asked to serve," said Mayra Chavez, a senior at Travis High School and one of the project's student organizers. "Elementary school children are not often called upon to volunteer, and we will prove to them that they can make a very real difference at a young age. Many high school students at Travis have never volunteered before, so we are also setting an example of service and selflessness for our peers."

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College Forward provides college preparatory and college retention services to motivated, economically-disadvantaged students in order to facilitate their transition to college and make the process exciting and rewarding. We believe that access to higher education is the right of every young Texan. For more information, visit www.collegeforward.org.

Global Youth Service Day is the largest youth service event in the world. GYSD is a year-round effort to expand the impact of the youth service movement. The initiative launches new service organizations, policy changes, and sustainable service programs to create a culture of engaged youth. State Farm Companies Foundation is the presenting sponsor. More than 125 national partners and 70 lead agencies throughout the United States organize campaigns. Overseas, national lead agencies in more than 100 countries participate. Planning Tool Kits, Service-Learning Curriculum Guides, classroom posters, grants, and more are available for youth, parents, teachers and organizations. For more information: www.ysa.org.

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