



For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Riley Silverman earns The Prudential Spirit of Community Award

Haut Gap

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Charleston, SC – Riley Silverman, 12, a seventh grader at Haut Gap Middle School, actively works to fight hunger in his community. Silverman’s efforts include helping pack weekend meals for students in need, maintaining a school vegetable garden that provides fresh produce to a local shelter, and raising money to pay off student lunch debts.

As a result of his efforts, he earned the Prudential Spirit of Community state award. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program is the United States’ largest youth recognition program based exclusively on volunteer community service. Created in 1995 by Prudential and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the program honors middle and high school students for outstanding service to others at the local, state and national levels.

Since he was 5 years old, Riley has enthusiastically participated in his older brother’s nonprofit to provide lunch bags for kids who didn’t have enough to eat on weekends; as “snack chef,” he’s helped prepare healthy snacks and given demonstrations on how to make them at home, for nearly 3,000 kids and parents volunteering at the group’s packing parties.

As the co-founder of an initiative called “Catch Up on Lunch,” Silverman has partnered with two groups to hold restaurant “spirit nights” that raised \$25,000 to cancel the lunch debts of students at four schools.

“When kids are hungry, they can’t enjoy school, and they won’t get the good grades that matter to get started in life,” explained Riley.

Riley is also an active “grower” with Katie’s Krops, an organization that mobilizes kids across the country to grow fresh produce for people in need.

To further address the issue of hunger, Silverman asked his principal for permission to plant three vegetable garden beds on his Haut Gap’s school grounds, then bought supplies, recruited volunteers, and ultimately donated 25

pounds of green peppers, squash, and basil to a local shelter. He also conducted hands-on planting workshops for 55 kids.

"Riley Silverman is a student with passion and determination," said Principal Travis Benintendo. "He excels in most things he does, but it is very special when you excel at helping others. Over the past couple of years, he has been working in our school garden with a partnership with Katie's Krops to offer fresh produce to a local shelter. In addition, he is the co-founder of an initiative called "Catch Up On Lunch" and has held local restaurant spirit nights that raised \$25,000 to cancel student lunch debt."

"These projects make the world a better place," said Riley, "and they also help kids think more about other people."

Benintendo said he looks forward to Silverman's future successes.

"I am so proud that he has been a part of Haut Gap Middle School as a top student, role model, and a trendsetter," said Benintendo.

For more information contact Principal Travis Benintendo at (832) 559-6418.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.