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## THE BETTER HOUR National High School Contest Honors Teen Leadership in Public Service

NEW YORK, NY. Six high-school students are being awarded for their philanthropic leadership from THE BETTER HOUR Contest for High School Students ([www.thebetterhour.com](http://www.thebetterhour.com)), a national effort to stir service efforts among today's youth and honor the legacy of abolitionist and philanthropist William Wilberforce. The winners are being honored by The Wilberforce Project, a division of Essentials in Education, with prizes ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000, which were funded by the John Templeton Foundation ([www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org)) whose charter highlights character education.

The year-long national contest encouraged high school students to launch public service projects, inspired by William Wilberforce, the British Parliamentarian who led the fight for the 1807 abolition of the slave trade and helped establish 67 philanthropies to fulfill what he called his "two great objects—the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners." Last year, the feature film "Amazing Grace" and the documentary film on national public television, "THE BETTER HOUR: The Legacy of William Wilberforce" helped restore Wilberforce's remarkable story and his rightful recognition in history.

**THE BETTER HOUR Contest First Prize winner, Ellie Morse** of Dickson High School in Dickson, Tennessee, will receive the \$10,000 top prize and award, to be presented by her Congressional Representative John Tanner (D-8) in Washington, D.C. on May 20<sup>th</sup>. She wins the first prize for her public service to raise money for "Invisible Children," for whom she provided supplies to several schools in Northern Uganda, the war-torn area where children have been kidnapped and left without parents, hope, provision, or education. Ellie initiated creative events, fairs, and projects at her school, and engaged many people in her community, not only to raise money, but also to raise awareness of the plight of the forgotten children of Uganda.



**Second place winner, Ashley Eberhart** of Culver Academy in Culver, Indiana, led an American Cancer Society “Relay” for Life. Ashley raised an unparalleled amount of money and brought divided sections of her small town together to unite for a cause that impacts one out of three Americans.



**Third place winner, Riley Mulhern** of Littleton High School in Englewood, Colorado, organized his Boy Scout troop to collect 1518 pairs of gently used shoes, which were shipped to orphans in Kenya and also supplied to the Denver Rescue Mission. (See photos)



**Fourth place winner, Sarasi Jayanatne** of Potomac Falls High School in Potomac Falls, Virginia, form the *Keep Reading Foundation* and collected 2000 children’s books which she shipped to impoverished children in Sri Lanka. Sarasi visited her Sri Lanka homeland, gave seminars to children about the value of reading, donated books to schools, and helped establish new libraries in areas which suffered devastation from the Tsunami.



**Fifth place winner, Greyson Gregory** of Branford High School in Branford, Connecticut, established an innovative website—StudentVolunteerLINK.com— as a free resource and internal portal that connects student volunteers to community service opportunities.



**A Special Award will be made Children Helping Children on behalf of Jourdan Urbach** of Roslyn Heights, New York, who founded Children Helping Children in 1999 when he was seven years old. As a prodigy violinist, for many years Jourdan been cited for his efforts to raise money for national medical organizations, surgery scholarship funds for the disenfranchised, and home healthcare for those with advanced form of neurological disease.



THE BETTER HOUR Contest for High School Students is associated with the documentary film which airs nationally on public television, “THE BETTER HOUR: The Legacy of William Wilberforce,” (DVD at [www.shopPBS.org](http://www.shopPBS.org)) and the related study guide, “CREATING THE BETTER HOUR: Lessons from William Wilberforce,” with foreword by Rick Warren. All information is at [www.thebetterhour.com](http://www.thebetterhour.com).

For photos of the winners and their projects, go to [www.thebetterhour/contest](http://www.thebetterhour/contest)

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