

Youth Service America announces Harris Wofford Award winners

Youth Service America (YSA) – the global organization that improves communities by increasing the number and diversity of young people serving in substantive roles – confirms the winners of the 2011 Harris Wofford Award, honoring exceptional service contributions worldwide.

Acknowledging those who make service and service-learning the common expectation and experience of every young person, the 2011 Harris Wofford Award winners are First Lady Michelle Obama (Public Official), the Y – YMCA of USA (Organization), Google (Media) and Dylan Mahalingam (Youth). Sponsored by State Farm®, the Wofford honorees will be announced at the National Service-Learning Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Former special assistant to President John F. Kennedy, Mr. Wofford launched the Peace Corps in 1961 and has subsequently dedicated his life to citizen service with an emphasis on youth. A member of YSA's board, the former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania was instrumental in crafting legislation throughout his political career creating the Corporation for National and Community Service, which encompasses AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America.

“Throughout this life, Mr. Wofford has been fully engaged with young people, illustrating how they could change the world for the better,” said YSA President and CEO Steve Culbertson. “YSA is recognizing four outstanding individuals and organizations who uphold his ideals in areas that shape and influence youth behavior.”

The 2011 Harris Wofford Award Winners are:

- Public Official – First Lady Michelle Obama: Before she became First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Obama was the founding Executive Director of Public Allies Chicago and developed the University of Chicago's first community service program. Continuing this effort as First Lady, Mrs. Obama launched the *Let's Move!* campaign tackling the challenge of childhood obesity and has tirelessly championed youth-led service.
- Organization – The Y, YMCA of USA: One of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the country, nearly 3,000 Y's nurture the potential of children and teens, improve health and well-being and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors.
- Media – Google: With a mission to organize the world's information for universal access, Google coordinates volunteer opportunities through its All for Good website. The most-used search engine also provides a range of platforms offering individuals and groups a wide variety of tools for easier project implementation as well as story sharing capabilities.
- Youth – Dylan Mahalingam: At age 9, Dylan co-founded Lil' MDGs (www.lilmdgs.org) – based on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals – which educates, inspires and empowers children in all corners of the world to help solve serious local and global issues. Spurred by a first-hand experience where Dylan experienced fellow youth living in poverty-stricken areas, he has since unified the efforts of four million young people to bring aid on four continents. He has raised more than \$10 million dollars for disaster relief and is only 16 years old.