

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Heartland Council of Pioneers Receives Governor's Points of Light Award

Lincoln, Neb. – The Heartland Council of Pioneers, received the Governor's Points of Light Group Award from Governor Dave Heineman on May 11, 2011 at a ceremony in Warner Chamber at the State Capitol in Lincoln. The awards are sponsored by ServeNebraska and presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

Jerry Golmanavich, past president of the Pioneers nominated the group because of their good works and community service. The Heartland Council of Pioneers volunteer organization was initially supported by industry; however, it now supports itself. Since being “spun off” it has continued to support many community projects throughout the Omaha Metropolitan area, as well as throughout Nebraska and the United States. In the Omaha area groups such as Hug-a-Bears and Hooks and Needles continue to provide stuffed bears to children that have just suffered from some misfortune and people who may be hospitalized or otherwise disabled. The Hug-a-Bears are distributed through hospitals, EMTs, the Douglas County Sheriff's Department, fire stations and entities such as Harmony House. Over the last 8 years over 20,000 Hug-a-Bears have been hand produced. The Hooks and Needles products such as lap robes, scarves and mittens, hats, afghans and quilts are distributed in Nebraska and Iowa to hospitals and other centers for disadvantaged people. These products easily number in the hundreds. Kitty and dog blankets are given to local humane societies and shelters. Project Connect committee serves schools throughout Nebraska and Iowa and even in Arizona. The Heartland Council has one of the largest Project Connect Communities throughout Pioneering-numbering about 100 organizations. This internet product teaches telecommunications by playing games on the internet. In addition, the Heartland Council collaborates with the Salvation Army to help with blood drives, Turkeyfest at Thanksgiving, Ringing Bells at Christmas time and manning the phones for Adopt-a-Family in conjunction with radio 104.5. None of the personnel are paid and they spend what might be called an “endowment” a legacy from when they were financially supported.

Also recognized at the ceremony and receiving the Youth Award was Mohit Jain a junior at Millard South High School in Omaha for his volunteer efforts in the area of public health which has had an impact on his community and that state at large. The Adult Award was presented to John Johnson for his volunteer efforts in organizing a student run grocery store and business incubator for the students of the village of Cody.

Each quarter, a panel of judges from across Nebraska reviews award nominations and make final recommendations to the Governor. The Points of Light awards are sponsored by Woodmen of the World.

To nominate individuals and groups for the Governor's Points of Light Awards who have made a difference through volunteerism, visit the ServeNebraska website at www.serve.nebraska.gov or call Kimberle Hall 800-291-8911 or 402-471-6228. The next nomination deadline is June 15, 2011.

ServeNebraska pursues its mission of mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

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