

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mourning Hope Grief Center Volunteers Receive Governor's Points of Light Award

Lincoln, Neb. – Governor Dave Heineman presented the Nebraska Governor's Points of Light Awards at a ceremony in Warner Chamber at the State Capitol in Lincoln on February 16 at 10:30 a.m.. The awards are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

Since 1994, Mourning Hope volunteers have been gently guiding bereaved youth toward the right path. All involved with Mourning Hope operate with a crystal clear, singular purpose – to bring comfort and support to children, teens, young adults and their families following the serious illness or death of a loved one. During the initial 11 years, Mourning Hope operated as an exclusively volunteer-ran organization. Currently, the Center functions with only two half-time staff and has served nearly 2,400 community members this past fiscal year. This program would not exist without its cadre of dedicated and trained volunteers which is why they are most deserving of the Governor's Point of Light Award.

Death does not discriminate and tragedy can strike at any time. Six percent of children under the age of 18 will experience the death of a parent, one in five will experience the death of an immediate family member, and approximately 90 percent of youth will experience the death of someone significant in their lives before graduating high school. Following the death of a loved one, finding someone who understands often makes the difference between going down the right or wrong path in life. Statistics show that children with unresolved grief are far more likely to drop out of school, engage in substance abuse, attempt suicide, commit crimes, or develop a psychiatric disorder.

Mourning Hope's volunteers offer new ways of approaching problems and help youth to trust again in what for many seems to be an unsafe and uncaring world. Their extraordinary efforts have a lasting, long-term impact in assisting young people to mourn, develop, and flourish as they move forward. They help counter the sense of isolation many bereaved children experience by providing encouragement to not only accept support for themselves, but also to help others. These volunteers offer a compassionate environment that can rekindle a child's love for life and living.

Also recognized at the ceremony and receiving the Adult Award were Bill and Evonne Williams, Omaha, for their volunteer efforts in organizing the Heartland Honor Flights for WWII veterans. The Youth Award was presented to Taylor Grace, a junior at Platte View High School in Springfield, for her volunteer efforts in organizing a campus beautification and vegetable garden for the Salvation Army Lied Renaissance Center in Omaha.

Each quarter, Commissioners from ServeNebraska review 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 800-291-8911 or 402-471-6228.

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

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