

The 2008-2009 Richard W. Riley Institute Emerging Public Leaders class presented their final projects on Saturday, March 21st; and they did not disappoint! As Dr. Gordon said in the awards presentation “This class has set the bar as an example of excellence for future classes to follow.” Here are the projects for the class of 2009:

**Brittany Donnelly Spring Valley High School
Columbia, SC**

Project: “Bowling for Success”- Brittany put on a bowling fundraiser to raise money to purchase business suits and other personal supplies for the women of the Killingsworth Home to help them with job interviews and overall confidence.

**Benton Wise West Florence High School
Marrion, SC**

Project: “Opening the Doors to Better Education” – Benton put together an awareness conference to bring to light the problems of South Carolina public education, specifically along the corridor of shame. He based his project off the recent Bud Ferillo documentary “Corridor of Shame: The Neglect of South Carolina’s Rural Schools,” and he helped in getting over 40,000 names on a petition to force the government of South Carolina to recognize the problem in SC public schools and do something to change it.

**Neha Parthasarathy SC Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities
Simpsonville SC**

Project: “Speak Your Mind” – Neha addressed the problem of public speaking in today’s youth. Through her experiences in debate and applying for colleges, she saw how important it was to be able to confidently speak to strangers and large crowds. Her project was a series of speaking seminars and conferences that helped those who participated in overcoming their anxiety of public speaking and enabling them to address others with confidence.

**Zacharias Kennedy Fairfield Central High School
Ridgeway, SC**

Project: “Knowledge For Life” – Zacharias wanted to help his classmates and their families with the economic burden of applying to colleges. His project helped identify what scholarships were, where students could apply for them and what credit means to a future college student. He was able to empower a large number of his classmates think about education after high school now that financial restrictions were not such a problem.

**Jon Baddley Mauldin High School
Simpsonville, SC**

Project: “Team One” – Jon combined the problems of child obesity with the lack of activity and productivity from our nations foster care children. His project used a sports camp to get the foster care children of his community involved in physical activity to improve their health and self-esteem while simultaneously providing a respite for their foster parents. The added attention from Team One as well as the physical activity had immeasurable positive effects on the foster children who participated in the activities.

**Michael Bibo Fort Mill High School
Tega Cay, SC**

Project: “The Flyers Green” – Michael wanted to raise awareness of how poor our environment is and start changing that trend with today’s youth. Through environmentally friendly activities and events that his project is sponsoring, Michael is teaching the leaders of tomorrow the need for conservation and environmental respect.

**Tierney O’Rourke Jesuit High School
Portland, OR**

Project: “Unidos en el Saber” – Tierney’s project was aimed at the migrant worker communities of the surrounding Portland region. Her project was aimed at providing basic school necessities as well as free tutoring services to the migrant families of Camp Azul. She hoped to create better opportunities and a brighter future for the children of Camp Azul as they struggled to receive even the most basic education with their migrant lifestyles.

**Mallory Boyd Hammond School
Columbia, SC**

Project: “R.E.A.C.H” – Mallory wanted to help the homeless children of Columbia by providing for them a project that would build their self-esteem and combat the problems associated with a homeless lifestyle. By partnering with The Children’s Garden Mallory served homeless children under the age of 5 by providing affection and attention through crafts and book reading to positively affect the children and their outlook on themselves.

**Amber Locklear Pinewood Preparatory School
Lincolville, SC**

Project: “Lauerne C. Williams Library” – Amber wanted to provide her town with an essential service that was lacking, a library. Through subsequent book drives and donations, Amber was able to, and is still collecting, books for her newly established library. Now her small town has the opportunity to conveniently expand their knowledge through books which provides for the betterment of the youth and the community as a whole.

**Tori James Forestview High School
Gastonia, NC**

Project: “Girls Helping Girls” – Tori’s project identified the need for positive female role models for the young women of her community. Knowing that girls entering high school are at their most impressionable stages, Tori provided positive role models for the girls in a safe environment to discuss problems and put them on a path to success.

**Ben Saul Emerald High School
Greenwood, SC**

Project: “Help Us Create A Greener Greenwood” – Ben wanted to raise awareness in school for the crucial need to recycle. His project was designed to provide his high school with recycling receptacles and also engage the surrounding community by encouraging them to recycle as well. Through his efforts Ben was able to set up a system that will be permanently applied at his school and also raise awareness about the importance of recycling.

**Landy Fink East Forsythe High School
Kernersville, NC**

Project: “P.E.A.C.E” – Landy wanted to combat the rising violence her community, specifically in the halls of her high school. Through her project, Landy was able to plant a hand crafted monument dedicated to peace in her community that would serve as a reminder to everyone about the importance of peace. A subsequent peace pole will be planted in her town’s sister city in the country of Japan.

**Sean Robins Strom Thurmond High School
Johnston, SC**

Project: “The Extra Things” – Sean designed his project to help save the extracurricular activities program at his school. Recent budget cuts would have done away with many of the activities that students enjoy outside of the classroom, but Sean’s project raised money to keep these activities in the budget through an all day carnival.

**Stephen Miller James Island Christian School
Charleston, SC**

Project: “Students Serving Seniors” – Stephen wanted to serve his community through active involvement with the senior citizens. His project was designed to regularly serve 9 senior citizens of his community everyday. Stephen was not only able to help the seniors of his community; he was also able to simultaneously increase community service among students of his high school.