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Conrad Receives Prudential's Spirit of Community Award

BY LEON G. RUSS
HOMETOWN NEWS

Spartanburg's Emily Conrad was awarded The Prudential Spirit of Community Award medallion for her work in developing "The Need to Read Book Club," a non-profit organization that acts as a multi-chapter reading club encouraging students to read and also raises money to buy books for at-risk children.

The Pine Street YMCA nominated Conrad, 16, for the award. It was there, during the YMCA's board meeting on Thursday, March 19, that she was presented the medallion for her efforts to raise literacy awareness and give back to the community.



PHOTO BY LEON G. RUSS

EMILY CONRAD RECEIVED THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARD MEDALLION FOR HER WORK IN DEVELOPING "THE NEED TO READ BOOK CLUB," FROM PRUDENTIAL REPRESENTATIVE EVELYN YOUNG, VICE PRESIDENT OF C. DAN JOYNER AND YOUNG REALTORS AT THE SPARTANBURG PINE STREET YMCA ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19.

In addition to the silver medallion, Conrad will also receive \$1,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. the first weekend in May.

There she will join the top two honorees - one middle school level and one high

school youth - from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events. Ten of them

"I really believe you are looking at the national winner" of the award.

-- Prudential representative Evelyn Young

will be named America's top youth volunteers for 2009 at that time.

Conrad was presented the award by Prudential representative Evelyn Young, Vice President of C. Dan Joyner and Young Realtors who told those gathered, "I really

organized monthly after-school meetings to discuss good books, and arranged for guest speakers, games, and crafts to add interest.

Conrad's club made such an impact that after two years she began thinking about expanding it. She formed her nonprofit organization, developed a website (www.needtoreadbookclub.org), and then helped establish chapters at Boys & Girls Clubs in Spartanburg and two public schools.

Conrad said one of the best things about her "Need to Read Book Club" is the fact that she gets to "encourage other kids to make a difference in the community. To be able to see them grow as community leaders, it makes me feel good."

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards represents the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service.

This is the 14th year the nationwide program has honored young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Prudential Financial conducts the program in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASPP).

For information on all of this year's Prudential Spirit of Community State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists, visit spirit.prudential.com or www.principals.org/prudential.

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