



What's It Take to Be a Real Hero?

July 16, 2009

Applebee's(R) Announces 10 Finalists in Nationwide Search for America's "Real Heroes"

LENEXA, KS, Jul 16, 2009 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- In Oregon, Kaye Hansen distributes quilts to mothers and fathers of fallen soldiers, while for the past 10 years Clayton Lillard in Texas has been repairing bikes and sending them to children of prisoners. In California, Stephanie Brehm works to relieve the stress and worries of life-threatening illnesses through horseback riding, while more than 40,000 books are sent each month to children in Georgia by Robin Ferst's Foundation for Childhood Literacy. These stories illustrate that heroes come from all walks of life; they are found in the smallest towns, the biggest cities, and range in age from young children to senior citizens.

Recently, Applebee's invited Americans to go online and nominate their "Real Heroes" -- the people making a real difference in our lives and neighborhoods every day. Today, Applebee's announced 10 finalists out of more than 8,500 nominees. From a 13-year-old boy helping children transition into state-funded care to an 82-year-old retiree who volunteers for various military organizations, these heroes represent a diverse group of people who are devoted to strengthening their communities. The finalists are Real Heroes from across the country; they are admired by those who know them and should be an inspiration to all.

The stories of all 10 Applebee's Real Hero finalists are posted on www.applebees.com/realheroes; Americans can vote for their favorite between now and July 23, 2009. The finalist who receives the most online votes will be named Applebee's National Real Hero and receive \$5,000 and a year's worth of Applebee's Realburgers(TM),(1) in addition to some much-deserved recognition.

The finalists are:

David Adamiec, Westbrook, Conn. David founded "Kidpacks of America, Inc." to fill "Kidpacks" with a five-day supply of clothing, toiletries, blankets and stuffed animals for children transitioning into state-funded care and foster care.

Stephanie Brehm, Julian, Calif. Stephanie founded "Leg Up Ranch" to offer therapeutic horseback riding to families dealing with a life-threatening illness. Stephanie's motivation is her son, who was diagnosed with leukemia and then a brain tumor just before she herself was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Robin Ferst, Atlanta, Ga. After losing her hearing, Robin turned to books as her lifeline. She founded Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy to supply books to children under the age of five in Georgia.

Joseph Gill, Severna Park, Md. Joseph works tirelessly to build a homeless shelter-resource center to serve the 1,500 homeless men and women in the Annapolis area.

Kaye Hansen, Boring, Ore. Kaye is the coordinator of the Oregon chapter of Home of the Brave Quilt Project. She personally delivers home-made quilts to mothers and fathers of fallen soldiers.

Clayton Lillard, Austin, Texas. Clayton started "Clayton's Backyard Crew" when he was just 10 years old by repairing discarded bikes to give to children whose parents are incarcerated.

Emily Schaller, Trenton, Mich. After being told she would not live to see high school due to cystic fibrosis, Emily, now in her 20s, made it her mission to raise awareness of the disease. She founded her own organization and each year organizes a bike ride from Detroit to Chicago to raise money for cystic fibrosis research.

Anthony Varnell, Madison, Tenn. Anthony started a mentoring program which pairs a young boy with a male role model. Through his organization, Boyz to Men, Anthony reaches out to youth in the community and gives them an opportunity to have a positive role model.

Solomon Volen, Philadelphia, Pa. Solomon, 82-years-old, spends his retirement volunteering at the VA Hospital, the Red Cross Disaster Service and the USO, among other organizations. He helps rebuild computers for disadvantaged children and works at a food bank. Recently, he has started making goodie bags to send overseas.

Amber Mitchell, Saint Louis, Mo. When Amber's father needed a bone marrow transplant, Amber organized a bone marrow drive at her university. She has helped recruit new donors and raised awareness of the shortage of African-American donors.

About Applebee's Services, Inc.

Applebee's Services Inc., and its affiliates, franchise and operate restaurants under Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar and is a DineEquity, Inc. (NYSE: DIN) brand. As of March 31, 2009, there were 1,992 Applebee's restaurants operating system-wide in 49 states, 16 international countries and one U.S. territory, of which 401 were company-owned. Additional information on Applebee's can be found at the company's website (www.applebees.com).

(1) Awarded in the form of one \$500 Applebee's gift card

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