



## Washington Campus Compact & Inspireum Announce the Winners of the 2011 Students In Service Awards

*\$25,000 in scholarships and grants awarded to the nation's most inspirational college student civic leaders, their schools, and their community partners*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Bellingham, WA – March 18, 2011** - Washington Campus Compact and Inspireum today announced the winners of the 2011 [Students In Service Awards](#), honoring college students for their outstanding service projects that positively impact society and inspire others to serve. The three winners were chosen by a national selection committee of civic leaders and over 714,000 supporters across the country who voted online for their favorite service project. Hundreds of college students nationwide applied for the award, and collectively contributed thousands of hours of time, effort, knowledge and leadership toward some of the most difficult challenges facing communities around the globe.

Rachel Cohen, a student at the University of Pennsylvania, is honored as the nation's most outstanding college student in service, receiving a \$5,000 scholarship for her exemplary rehabilitation work with animals and homeless youth. Rachel Rose Jackson from the University of Northern Colorado is awarded a \$2,500 scholarship as the runner-up for her inspirational work providing education and health care for women and children living on the streets of Ghana. Rigoberto Sirin-Pichiya from Cleveland State Community College is honored with \$2,500 as the "fan favorite," receiving the most votes from supporters across the country for his work providing health screenings for Cleveland's Hispanic community. Their stories, videos, articles and photos can be found at [www.serviceawards.org](http://www.serviceawards.org).

In addition to providing scholarships, the Students In Service Award program provides \$2,500 grants to the college service-learning centers of each winner for the purpose of supporting their civic engagement programs for students. \$2,500 grants are also awarded to the three community agencies that supported the winning projects to further their vital community work.

The scholarship recipients and their service projects will be recognized at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Continuums of Service Conference, a nationally recognized service and civic engagement conference in San Diego, CA, on April 28, 2011. "We are so excited to recognize these amazing students for their outstanding service at the conference," said Washington Campus Compact Executive Director Jennifer Dorr. "These students address some of the most difficult challenges facing communities around the world head-on with determination and innovation. They show us that community service offers demonstrable benefits that go far beyond the impact on recipients: service teaches us how to become engaged, responsible citizens, and is a vital activity for the positive development of the next generation."

Washington Campus Compact and Inspireum have partnered to provide the Students in Service Awards to celebrate the inspirational service work of these outstanding students and engage the broader community in supporting students, colleges and universities, and community organizations that cultivate student civic leadership through service.

### **The Winning Service Projects**

The following are summaries of the winners and their service projects.

[Rachel Cohen](#) from the University of Pennsylvania in Pennsylvania, PA, founded and currently directs a nonprofit called Hand2Paw, which has empowered over 70 homeless youth from Covenant House Pennsylvania to volunteer with Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society. Hand2Paw provides job opportunities for homeless youth that allow them to enjoy positive, therapeutic experiences with animals while gaining valuable job skills. These youth learn the value of treating animals with respect, and promise to be change-agents in their communities, promoting kindness and empathy for animals. "Rachel came into this project with a love of

animals and an understanding of the huge homeless animal problem in the city of Philadelphia. Rachel also understands how that problem faces so many young people throughout our city, and her dedication, determination and energy are positively affecting change for both of these homeless populations,” said Robert Zindell of Covenant House.

[Rachel Rose Jackson](#) from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado is being recognized for her exemplary work providing education and health care for women and children in Ghana. Rachel cofounded the Kayayei Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing on-going relief and support to women and children living on the streets of Accra, Ghana. “Kayayei” is a Twi term coined to describe the young women who live and work the streets of Accra. Many of these women are kidnapped from their homes and forced to live on the streets in a form of modern-day slavery, selling themselves and other trinkets to profit the pocket of their master. Through Rachel’s organization, hundreds of women and children have been provided with lifetime health care coverage, education, medical treatment, and vocational training that has enabled them to leave the field of prostitution. Many others have been provided housing to protect them from frequent rape and rampant crime that accompanies a life on the streets of the third world. Rachel writes, “The Kayayei Association strives to re-instill the self-respect and dignity many of these women have lost somewhere alongside the road. We work to educate these women on leadership and empowerment, assist them with relief, and whenever possible, collaborate with them to build a life for them and their children off the streets.”

[Rigoberto Sirin-Pichiya](#) from Cleveland State Community College in Cleveland, Tennessee is recognized as the “fan favorite” for his work providing health screenings for the local Hispanic population in Cleveland. Rigoberto used his nursing education to benefit his community by providing basic medical care to local Spanish speaking residents. He initiated and conducted a project in partnership with a local Hispanic grocery and convenience store to provide free, voluntary vital signs health screenings for local community members who had limited access to medical care. Rigo learned that some Hispanic people cannot afford medical care, and others do not pursue help because they do not speak English well and are not comfortable going to physicians who do not speak Spanish. They feel they cannot explain their medical situation or understand information provided by the physician. Rigoberto increased his patients’ awareness of overall health, nutrition, and exercise needs. He encouraged participants to visit a health professional annually for wellness checks and directed them to clinics providing services for Spanish-speaking patients.

### **About Washington Campus Compact**

Established in 1992 and hosted at Western Washington University, [Washington Campus Compact](#) and its membership of 41 two- and four-year colleges and universities are committed to providing meaningful experiences for students to become active, engaged leaders in their communities, furthering the civic and public purposes of higher education and strengthening communities. Washington Campus Compact is an affiliate state office of Campus Compact, a national organization comprised of more than 1,100 higher education institutions committed to the civic and public purposes of higher education.

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### **About Inspireum**

[Inspireum](#) provides a comprehensive technology and media platform that helps organizations recognize and reward inspirational young people in America. Inspireum utilizes proprietary platform technology, hosted services and social media to create a comprehensive nomination, voting and donation platform that powers inspirational youth awards, scholarships and fundraising programs. In addition to the Students in Service Awards™, Inspireum in partnership with [Trusted Sports, Inc.](#) manages the [High School Football Rudy Awards™](#) honoring athletes who have overcome tremendous obstacles to not only find success on the field, but also serve as an inspiration to others. This scholarship awards program looks beyond traditional athletic performance measures to reward team-oriented values and inspirational impact that help youth succeed throughout life.

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