

THE PRESIDENT'S YOUTH SERVICE AWARDS

Working with President George H.W. Bush, Sam Beard was the driving force creating the President's Youth Service Awards in 1992 to attract thousands of young Americans into service.

Acting on the recommendation of Mr. Beard, the Presidents' Summit on Volunteerism in 1997 adopted these awards and set the national goal of attracting two million young Americans to perform 100 hours of service.

The organization was co-chaired by Presidents Bush, Carter, Clinton and Ford along with Nancy Reagan and Colin Powell. At Mr. Beard's suggestion, President George W. Bush held the first major presidential press conference highlighting these youth service awards, and created the Presidential Service Awards.

More than three million young Americans have now been recognized for completing more than 100 hours of service.

“The Office of the President is a powerful motivator. For over 14 years, the Jefferson Awards had the vision and tenacity to pursue using this to inspire young Americans to volunteer, and now that dream is a perpetual reality with over three million participants.”

*Hon. Harris Wofford,
former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania,
and CEO of the Corporation for
National & Community Service*



CREATING A PRESIDENTIAL GRASSROOTS RECOGNITION SYSTEM FOR VOLUNTEERING IN AMERICA

For 14 years, from 1989 through 2003, the Jefferson Awards worked with Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush to create a presidential grassroots recognition system for volunteering. We modeled this after the President's Physical Fitness Awards.

This began with a simple, but powerful idea – the idea of Bud Wilkinson, the Oklahoma football coach, which was launched by President Eisenhower in 1956. Eisenhower's goal was to increase physical fitness. The vision was to use the power of the presidency to inspire



President Clinton presenting a service award

thousands to run, sit-up and chin-up. By 1990, over 6 million Americans of all ages were part of the President's Physical Fitness Challenge, and over 1 million individuals per year were winning awards from the President for their participation.

The Jefferson Award's vision was to follow this model and inspire millions to get into service.

The Jefferson Awards worked for two and half years with Gregg Petersmeyer, Special Assistant to President George H.W. Bush and Ray Chambers. In 1992, President Bush signed the Executive Order to create the President' Youth Service Awards (PYSA) and invited the Jefferson Awards to administer them. In a short time, over 50,000 students joined the vision.

The Jefferson Awards continued this work with Bill Clinton. The name changed to the President's Student Service Awards (PSSA.) With leadership from Harris Wofford, in 1997 PSSA was added to the President's Service Summit in Philadelphia. The presidents set the goal for 2 million students to perform 100 hours of service. The Jefferson Awards were invited to continue administering them.

Under President George W. Bush, the Jefferson Awards began working with John Bridgeland, Special Assistant to the President. We recommended that the president appoint a specific Presidential Council to oversee the awards and worked with the White House to add Americans of all ages. The President announced the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) in January 2003. The Bush administration issued an RFP and the Points of Light Foundation won the opportunity to administer the awards.



The Jefferson Awards worked from 1989 through 2003 with three Presidents to create this grassroots presidential recognition system for service modeled after the President's Physical Fitness Awards. In perpetuity, our initiative will remain a cornerstone inspiring service in America.

“Sam Beard acts like he’s 42, and has the can-do spirit and energy of a 32-year old. President Bush was delighted to have Sam and the Jefferson Awards work with us to help create the President’s Youth Service Awards.”

*Gregg Petersmeyer,
Assistant to President George H. W.
Bush and Director of the White House
Office of National Service*



At the Presidents' Service Summit in Philadelphia, Presidents Bush, Clinton and Carter, along with Mrs. Reagan, endorsed the Jefferson Awards initiated Presidents' Student Service Awards and set the goal of involving 2 million students in service. 1997