

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 21

BY SENATOR PETERSON

A RESOLUTION

To commend Nikki Leali on being named a State Honoree in Louisiana for the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

WHEREAS, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program represents the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service; and

WHEREAS, all public and private middle and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs, and affiliates of Points of Light's HandsOn Network, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award; and

WHEREAS, this prestigious award presented by Prudential Financial, Inc., in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, honors young volunteers across the country who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to serving their communities; and

WHEREAS, the nationwide program, in its twenty-fourth year, recognizes young people for outstanding, self-initiated community service; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Leali, a thirteen-year-old seventh grader at Ursuline Academy organized a reading club partnering middle level students with younger children once a month to read and work on craft projects; and

WHEREAS, Nikki also conducted an annual book donation and swap drive for several years that redistributed more than fifty-five thousand books in her community; and

WHEREAS, when she was six years old, Nikki won a small city grant to host a neighborhood book exchange in conjunction with the national Little Free Library initiative; and

WHEREAS, each year she continued to collect and give away books to encourage reading and literacy, and eventually became a volunteer at the New Orleans Public Library; and

WHEREAS, while volunteering one Saturday in 2017, Nikki came up with the idea of starting a reading club to "provide opportunities for younger children to feel confident reading in a safe and fun environment and to encourage middle school students to serve their community"; and

WHEREAS, Nikki recruited fellow middle school students to join her club and invited kids from ages two to nine to attend monthly gatherings through social media; and

WHEREAS, initially, meetings of the "Crescent City Reading Buddies" club were held at places like pet stores and coffee shops, but the club found a regular home at a library branch with each meeting featuring a different theme, a hands-on craft project, and reading time; and

WHEREAS, attendance was meager at first, but since creating a website and providing incentives from corporate sponsors, between fifteen and thirty children regularly attend club meetings and Nikki hopes to eventually hold club meetings at additional library branches around New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, this extraordinary young woman exemplifies the spirit of community that is so important to the future of our state and country; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities, and the overall vitality of American society depends, in great measure, upon the dedication of young people like Nikki Leali who use their compassion and considerable talent to assist others.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Nikki Leali on being chosen as one of the State Honorees in Louisiana for the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, recognize her outstanding record of volunteer service, peer leadership, and community spirit, and extend to her best wishes for continued success and happiness in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Nikki Leali.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE