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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Present the Accessible Community Task Force student recognition awards

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

SUBMITTED BY: Dawn Portner, Special Events Coordinator

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

The Accessible Community Task Force (ACTF) annually recognizes the efforts of students in the community who make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. Councilwoman Bruzan Taylor will present the awards.

BACKGROUND:

The annual recognition of area students for their exemplary service and outstanding commitment to removing barriers and stereotypes for fellow students with disabilities has been a long-standing tradition of the City of Naperville. This year's effort has been led by the ACTF which is a citizen committee formed in August 2016 to compliment the efforts of the Advisory Commission on Disabilities (ACD). Whereas the ACD focuses on City of Naperville facilities, programs and operations, the ACTF reaches out into the community to assist individuals and private companies in the areas of transportation, young adult and youth initiatives, business compliance, employment, education/awareness and collaboration

DISCUSSION:

All award recipients were nominated by teachers and/or administrators from Community Unit School District 203 and Indian Prairie School District 204. This year, the ACTF would like to recognize six outstanding students. The awards include a personalized certificate of appreciation and a gift card.

Jorie Bender - Jorie is a senior at Waubonsie Valley High School and participates as a unified

partner in Special Olympics and Peer Partners. As a Special Olympics coach, Jorie will go out of her way to support her peers. She has an interest in a career path that supports individuals with disabilities after high school and will continue to make a difference in the lives of those around her. Jorie deserves to be recognized for her kindness, care for others and her commitment to individuals with disabilities.

Caitlyn Bergerman - Caitlyn, a senior at Waubonsie Valley High School has worked all four years to overcome any obstacle in her way to be successful. She is a positive role model for her classmates and peers. Caitlyn welcomes new students and volunteers to show them around the school and introduce them to staff and friends. She has been an active member of the Special Olympics and Best Buddies programs. Caitlyn has used that platform to be an outspoken advocate for how to respect those that are different. She acknowledges the difficulties she has faced and is forthcoming in the work she has done and continues to do to meet her goals.

Kristen Dorsey - Kristen is a student with D203's Connections Transition Services and has stood out among a crowd of inspiring and exceptional students. She has been a student with the Connections program for four years and has proven herself to be a leader among her peers from day one. She has worked independently in the community at Peter Pan Preschool and Daycare as a kitchen attendant. There, she has impressed her supervisors and colleagues with her work ethic, compassion, and determination. Kristen has also been learning the ropes in the nursing field assisting the school nurses at Beebe Elementary School. Her motivation is to be as much of a help to others as she can be. Kristen not only leads by example, but she is often heard encouraging others as she is a shining example of what it means to be a contributing member of our community.

Emma Hutchinson - Emma is a senior at Waubonsie Valley High School and is passionate about helping students with special needs and making everyone feel included. As President of Best Buddies, she works hard to lead by example of what a peer partner should be. Emma has worked to train her peers who are new to Best Buddies in order to ensure all students feel welcome and have fun. Her work with Best Buddies is very important to her and she always takes the time to prioritize her work on the Best Buddies board.

Makena Jones - Makena is a senior at Naperville Central High School and goes up and beyond leadership expectations of the Adapted PE program at Naperville Central. The leaders assist our students with special abilities to learn sport, health/fitness concepts, and with everyday socialization skills. She also volunteers her time outside of the class (before school, during her lunch and after school) to work with students with special needs Makena also advocates for our Adapted PE program by connecting with parents, teachers, and administrators to help open lines of communications. She also works hard to establish an inclusive environment both in and outside the classroom.

Catherine Schuch - Catherine is a senior at Metea Valley High School. She has been a unified partner for the school's Special Olympics program and a member of the Special Olympics Illinois Youth Activation Committee. She is a trusted member of this program and is always the first choice when the school needs someone to take on added responsibilities. Our students have learned most of their good behaviors from Catherine because she expects that from them while at the same time still have fun and be a great friend. Catherine is one of the most dedicated, kind and passionate young people the school has ever had in their Special Olympics program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City provides each award recipient with a \$50 Downtown Naperville gift card.

