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DMNH Volunteer Honored with Youth Service Award from Gov. Markell

Wilmington, DE – Alex Gustafson, a 10th grade volunteer at the Delaware Museum of Natural History, will be honored by Governor Jack Markell on April 21, 2015 in Dover, DE for the Governor’s Youth Volunteer Service Awards.

More than 300 people are expected to join the governor in honoring the 10 individuals and 4 groups of young people for their outstanding volunteer service. The event will begin with a reception at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6 p.m. and the ceremony starting at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person and are available at www.volunteerdelaware.eventbrite.com.

“It is my privilege to honor our young people for volunteering their talents to support people in need and to help strengthen our communities,” Gov. Markell said. “It will be my pleasure to thank our youth for turning their passion for public service into action.”

Gustafson, of Chadds Ford, PA, is a student at the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School in the University Scholars Program, an honors college-preparatory program designed to maximize the intellectual potential for gifted and motivated learners. The 16-year-old began volunteering at the Museum in 2014, and was nominated for this award for his work on the development of a cataloging system for the Museum’s collection of over 500 rocks and minerals.

Using a dichotomous key, Gustafson identified each rock and mineral specimen in the Museum’s collection. He then constructed a key for those rocks, including pictures, descriptions, and uses for each. In addition, he created a separate chart detailing the scientific data related to each specimen, including its composition, hardness, luster, and other categories.

“I have a passion for rocks and minerals, and even have my own collection at home that was started by my dad,” Gustafson said. “Eventually I’d love to go into environmental science and use my knowledge of rocks and minerals in that field.”

The Governor’s Youth Volunteer Service Awards are sponsored by the Office of the Governor, Delaware Health and Social Services, the Division of State Service Centers, the State Office of Volunteerism, as well as the Governor’s Commission on Community and Volunteer Service.

This year’s recipients participated in such diverse activities as peer mentoring, creating their own programs based on needs they viewed in communities, and assisting the families of deployed military service members. The 2015 Youth Volunteer Service Award recipients represent the efforts of thousands of Delawareans who make positive contributions to society and inspire others to do the same.

WHAT: *Governor’s Youth Volunteer Service Awards*

WHERE: Dover Downs Ballrooms B/C, 1131 DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901

DATE: Tuesday, April 21, 2015

HOURS: Registration at 5 p.m.; Dinner at 6 p.m.; Ceremony at 7 p.m.

ADMISSION: \$25 per person

MORE INFO: Visit www.volunteerdelaaware.org or call (302) 658-9111

About the Delaware Museum of Natural History

As the only natural history museum in the state, the Delaware Museum of Natural History opened its doors in 1972 to excite and inform people about the natural world through exploration and discovery. The Museum houses Delaware's only permanent dinosaur display, surrounded by exhibits of mammals, shells, and other specimens from around the world. The Museum cares for world-renowned scientific collections of mollusks and birds, including one of the top-fifteen mollusk collections in the United States.

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