

Urbandale High School Junior Receives President's Volunteer Service Award

Urbandale High School junior, Marissa Chavez, was honored with a President's Volunteer Service Award for her exemplary volunteer service and extraordinary contribution to her community and nation

URBANDALE, Iowa – February 27, 2018 – [Urbandale High School](#) (UHS) students were welcomed this past fall with what some considered a lofty goal when Principal Tim Carver revealed the school's new vision of changing the world. However, throughout the course of the 2017–18 school year, students have not only embraced the vision but have taken action to make that vision a reality. Most recently, UHS junior Marissa Chavez was honored for her exemplary volunteer service with a President's Volunteer Service Award. The award, which recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of time to serve their communities and their country, was granted by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

"Demonstrating civic responsibility through volunteerism is an important part of life," said National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Executive Director JoAnn Bartoletti. "These honorees practice a lesson we hope all young people, as well as adults, will emulate."

Prudential Spirit of Community Award applications were distributed nationwide this past September through middle schools and high schools, Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and Affiliates of Points of Light's HandsOn Network. These schools and officially-designated local organizations nominated local honorees whose applications were advanced for state-level judging. In addition to granting President's Volunteer Service Awards, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards selected State Honorees, Distinguished Finalists and Certificate of Excellence recipients. Volunteer activities were judged on criteria including personal initiative, creativity, effort, impact and personal growth.

"I like to volunteer because it gives me joy to help others, especially those less fortunate than I am," said Chavez. "Through multiple organizations, I get to spend a lot of time doing what I love."



While upholding her rigorous academic coursework at the high school, Chavez is also enrolled in classes through DMACC in order to earn a Liberal Arts Associate's Degree shortly after graduating from UHS. Chavez is highly involved with school activities including being a member of the Catalyst group, manager for the girls cross country and basketball teams, a past sprinter for the girls track and field team and a past LEO Club member. When not participating in school activities, Chavez can be found volunteering at the Bidwell Riverside Center, participating in Meals from the Heartland or serving as a member of the Aldersgate Methodist Church Youth Group.

"Service to our community and giving back to others in need are at the heart of who we are not only at Urbandale High School but also in Urbandale as a whole," said Carver. "Marissa embodies that spirit of service through action. We congratulate her on this tremendous recognition and honor."

In addition, Chavez organized, planned and implemented a homelessness project to raise money for Joppa as a member of the Simpson Youth Academy. She participates in the Urban Plunge learning experience of aiding poverty-stricken communities, serves as a youth counselor through Wesley Woods Methodist Camp and participates in the Appalachia Service Project whose aim is to help fix houses in areas with high poverty.

The Urbandale Community School District congratulates Chavez for this well-deserved recognition and meaningful honor as a recipient of a President's Volunteer Service Award. Chavez clearly demonstrates a strong capacity for leadership, an altruistic spirit and a wholehearted connection with her peers, teachers, family and community. Chavez, as with so many UHS students, is proving that lofty goals are the only goals worth having. Perhaps James Allen said it best, "Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so you shall become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil."

About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The District serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale District supports an increasingly diverse student population where 47 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout the District. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: UrbandaleSchools.com and follow on Twitter [@UrbandaleCSD](https://twitter.com/UrbandaleCSD).

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