



**C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER**  
GOVERNOR

## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE AFTER 5:00 P.M.  
November 10, 2009

Contact: Mark Warbis  
208-334-2100

### **Governor Otter Honors 2009 Governor's Brightest Stars Award Recipients**

Boise – The Governor's Brightest Stars shined once again as Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter and First Lady Lori Otter hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> annual awards ceremony at Boise State University with over 500 in attendance. The annual Governor's Brightest Star Awards ceremony honors Idaho volunteers who selflessly provide voluntary public service within their communities. KVTB anchor Carolyn Holly served as emcee for the celebration.

The Governor's Brightest Star Awards are hosted by Serve Idaho, the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism in partnership with Boise State University's Service-Learning Department. Sixty-seven individuals and groups representing communities throughout Idaho were recognized for their outstanding volunteer efforts in six categories, including Corporation, Small Business, Organization, School, Student and Individual. The Governor and First Lady also announced the First Lady's Choice and The Governor's Choice Awards.

Governor Otter said, "This is a great opportunity to give some well-deserved credit to the folks who make a real difference in our communities, and in our lives. Lori and I are privileged to be part of this program, and to have the chance to rub shoulders with people who selflessly display tremendous civic virtue."

This year's honorees in the Individual and Student categories are making baseball fields safe for children, rocking babies while their young mothers attend school, helping improve access to end-of-life care, creating a "swear jar" fund to collect money to purchase items for local charities, and cleaning up Idaho's highways,

The Corporations, Small Businesses and Organizations being recognized, are teaching financial literacy classes at homeless shelters, donating to local events, providing employees as volunteers, and supporting veterans and under-served groups. One business provides flexible work schedules so their employees can volunteer.

The Brightest Star Schools are recruiting and training tutors and mentors, providing reusable shopping bags and nutritional cookbooks to local food banks. They are also providing students with opportunities to contribute to their communities through voluntary service.

Serve Idaho, the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism, administers Idaho's National Service Program AmeriCorps, provides training and technical assistance in the field of volunteer management and works to engage more Idahoans in volunteerism. The Commission is housed within the Idaho Department of Labor. For more information, please telephone Serve Idaho at 208-332-3578 or visit [www.serveidaho.org](http://www.serveidaho.org)

###

## **2009 Governor's Brightest Stars Highlighted During the Ceremony**

**The 2009 Governor's Brightest Stars who were highlighted joined Governor Butch Otter and First Lady Lori Otter on stage while emcee Carolyn Holly praised their volunteerism.**

### **2009 Governor's Brightest Star Corporation of the Year:**

#### **Premier Technology Inc., Blackfoot**

Premier Technology, an engineering, manufacturing and construction management company that emphasizes community service, small town values and a good work ethic, was a sponsor for a day-long career expo and engineering challenge on September 23 at the Lemhi County Fairgrounds in Salmon to help students from rural Idaho communities set education and career goals.

#### **Corporations Highlighted during the Ceremony:**

Smith Optics, Ketchum  
Washington Trust Bank, Boise

### **2009 Governor's Brightest Star Small Business of the Year:**

#### **Fred Kesler Agency - Farmers Insurance, Meridian**

The Fred Kesler Agency is a small business where every staff member is committed to giving back. Through active involvement in the Mayor's Anti-Drug coalition, Meridian's Promise, Kiwanis, Drug-Free Idaho, Leadership Meridian, and the Meridian Chamber of Commerce, this small business regularly lives up to its motto—"*Protecting our community, One family at a Time.*" This small business sets the pace for volunteerism in Meridian and inspires others to give to their highest potential.

#### **Small Businesses Highlighted during the Ceremony:**

Ketchum Kitchens, Ketchum  
MBT Masai USA Corp (Masai Barefoot Technology), Hailey

### **2009 Governor's Brightest Star Organization of the Year:**

#### **David Ketchum American Legion Post #115, Ketchum**

The David Ketchum American Legion Post #115 not only contributes countless hours of service to the Wood River Valley community, they also inspire their fellow citizens to step up and help those in need. Organizations such as the local soup kitchens, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the elderly benefit from their selflessness and hard work. Members of the Wood River Valley join Boy Scout Venturing Crew #192 in thanking these outstanding volunteers.

#### **Organizations Highlighted during the Ceremony:**

College of Southern Idaho RSVP Senior Assisted Services Volunteer Transportation Program,  
Twin Falls  
Special Olympics World Winter Games 2009, Idaho

### **2009 Governor's Brightest Star School of the Year:**

#### **Riverstone International School, Boise**

Through a strong foundation built on the five pillars of Academic Excellence, International Understanding, Community and Service, Leadership, and Outdoor Education, Riverstone International School ensures that all students reach their potential in a respectful environment.

Riverstone's biggest program, the One Stone Club, has completed over 200 projects in the last seven years and all students must complete meaningful service learning projects to graduate.

**Schools Highlighted during the Ceremony:**

Lakeland High School, Rathdrum  
Vera C. O'Leary Middle School, Twin Falls

**2009 Governor's Brightest Star Student of the Year:**

**Kylie Poppen, Eagle - Riverstone International School**

Kylie Poppen, a senior at Riverstone International School, has logged over 615 volunteer hours of service in the past year. She is a leader in service and philanthropy in her community. "I am fortunate to work with many bright stars, but Kylie is more like a star shooting across the sky; it is impossible not to notice and admire the brilliance." said Neva Geisler, Volunteer Engagement Director of United Way. Kylie has received U.S. Congressional Award Bronze and Silver Medals.

**Students Highlighted during the Ceremony:**

Amara (Amy) DiFrancesco, Sun Valley – Graduate of Riverstone International School,  
Currently Attending Rice University  
Genevieve Nutting, Boise - Boise State University

**2009 Governor's Brightest Star Individual of the Year:**

**Sharon Florence, Boise**

For 21 years, Sharon Florence has served with CASA, the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. Sharon has been the voice in court for more than 100 foster care children who now have safe homes, free of abuse and neglect. Sharon also mentors many new volunteers to the CASA program. Her dedication and length of service to children placed in foster care inspire others.

**Individuals Highlighted during the Ceremony:**

**Mark Bennett, Meridian**  
**Ramona Walhof, Boise**

**2009 First Lady's Choice:**

**Wal-Mart Supercenter, Meridian**

Wal-Mart Supercenter, Meridian, considers itself a "store of the community," providing financial and volunteer support to dozens of charitable and community organizations and events. It has a particular focus on supporting veterans and military families, traditionally underserved groups, and people with disabilities. Wal-Mart employees volunteer with Hospice, Special Olympics, Optimist Baseball Teams, Salvation Army, Meridian's Promise, Project Patch, Meridian Fire Department, food banks and local schools.

**2009 Governor's Choice:**

**Kootenai Health's Volunteer Services, Coeur d'Alene**

One of the strongest volunteer programs in the Northwest, Kootenai Health's Volunteer Services organization is composed of hundreds of dedicated teenagers, volunteer nurses, retirees, former patients, child safety experts, and pet therapists. Together, they provide an array of much-needed services, thereby strengthening Kootenai Medical Center's mission to provide compassionate health care for all.

## **Complete List of 2009 Governor's Brightest Stars**

Brief biographies on each nominee are available upon request.

Telephone Serve Idaho at 208-332-3578 or e-mail Kelly.Staskey@labor.idaho.gov

### **\* 2009 Governor's Brightest Stars Highlighted during the Ceremony**

#### **Corporations**

- \*Premier Technology, Blackfoot
- \*Smith Optics, Ketchum
- \*Wal-Mart Supercenter, Meridian
- \*Washington Trust Bank, Boise

#### **Small Businesses**

- \*Fred Kesler Agency - Farmers Insurance, Meridian
- \*Ketchum Kitchens, Ketchum
- \*MBT (Masai Barefoot Technology), Hailey

#### **Organizations**

- Capital Improvement Committee, Eagle High School, Eagle
- Coeur d'Alene Parent Teacher Association, Coeur d'Alene
- College of Southern Idaho Refugee Center, Twin Falls
- \*College of Southern Idaho RSVP Senior Assisted Services Volunteer Transportation, Twin Falls
- \*David Ketchum American Legion Post #115, Ketchum
- Girl Scout Service Unit #21, Sun Valley
- Idaho End-of-Life Coalition, Boise
- Idaho State Broadcasters Association, Idaho
- \*Kootenai Health's Volunteer Services, Coeur d'Alene
- Meridian Police Athletic League PAL Football, Meridian
- \*Special Olympics 2009 World Winter Games, Idaho
- Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation, Sun Valley

#### **Schools**

- \*Lakeland High School, Rathdrum
- Lewis Clark State College, Lewiston
- Middleton High School, Middleton
- Project C.D.A. Alternative High School, Coeur d'Alene
- \*Riverstone International School, Boise
- \*Vera C. O'Leary Middle School, Twin Falls

#### **Students**

- Blake Alfson, Hayden Lake
- Dakota Barnes, Hailey
- Hannah Coad, Sagle
- \*Amara DiFrancesco, Sun Valley
- Austin Dobbs, Twin Falls
- Dylan Dobbs, Twin Falls
- Hanna Fischer, Boise
- Atticus Hoffman, Boise
- Courtney Hollar, Boise
- Danielle Hooper, Boise
- Mackenzie Ingraham, Jerome
- Hosanna Kabakoro, Twin Falls
- Ashton Lupton, Hailey
- Rhiannon Marquez, Boise
- Sierra Norman, Twin Falls
- \*Genevieve Nutting, Boise
- \*Kylie Poppen, Eagle
- Cooper Thomas, Orofino

## Individuals

Janet Aikele, Moore

John Allen, Orofino

\*Mark Bennett, Meridian

Kathy Caldwell, Boise

Miles Carroll, Idaho Falls

Kathee Clark, Kimberly

Dave Cook, Boise

Mike Crawford, Sun Valley

Walt Douglas, Kuna

Karry Fischer, Boise

\*Sharon Florence, Boise

Michelle Lucas, Twin Falls

Gloria McCuiston, Jerome

Renee Cornell McQuade, Calder

Ruann Meade, Kimberly

Stanley Meholchick, Caldwell

Dwight Mogford, Meridian

Linette Mooring, Boise

John O'Connor, Sun Valley

Mazal Simantov, Boise

Don Simis, Gooding

Louise Tanton, Boise

Joanne Teats, Kooskia

\*Ramona Walhof, Boise