

No Challenge too big for California kids

Teens cited for volunteering in community

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When California Area High School juniors Ronald Lincoski and J.J. Cullen began volunteering in their communities, they weren't planning on receiving \$250 for their work.

But they both received the Challenge Program's Community Service Award, which carries a \$250 stipend, for their dedication and contribution of more than 200 volunteer hours.

The Challenge Program encourages students to better themselves and their communities through community service, high grade-point average or school attendance.

Lincoski began cleaning up a World War I, World War II, Korean and Vietnam War Memorial in Daisytown for his Eagle Scout project. He chose to apply for the community service award because he already had put a substantial number of hours into the project.

"When we started working on the memorial it was in horrendous shape," Lincoski said.

Lincoski and his team of family and community members removed overgrown shrubbery,



J.J. Cullen was recognized by the Challenge Program for his volunteer endeavors at Roscoe Volunteer Fire Department and Flo's Personal Care Home.

sealed cracks and installed a french drain system and lights. They also erected poles to display the Pennsylvania, U.S. and Prisoners of War flags.

"Older people have told me how nice it is, and it gives me a real sense of pride to have done it," Lincoski said.

The project would have cost the community about \$20,000. Lincoski initially planned to earn the money through fundraisers. But after sending letters to state representatives and local companies seeking materials, Lincoski was able to complete the project with donations and help from other community volunteers.

J.J. Cullen, who uses a wheelchair due to brittle bone disease, started working with the radio system for the Roscoe Volunteer Fire Department because he had friends who volunteered there. He also has been a junior firefighter for the past two years.

"I have some limitations, and it's important for people in my position to recognize that, but there's still a lot I can do," he said.

As a child, Cullen appeared as Santa Claus at Flo's Personal Care Home and presented gifts to residents. Because the home is next door to the fire department, he decided to start mak-



Ronald Lincoski

ing regular visits to the people he saw sitting on the porch every day.

"I play bingo with the older ladies, and they love it," he said. "Many of them don't have much family, and it gives me a way to help them."

Cullen was recognized by the Challenge Program for volunteering at both the fire department and the personal care home.

Cullen and Lincoski plan to continue their volunteer work, although Lincoski said he probably will not take on such a large project anytime soon. Cullen wants to work part time as a radio dispatcher for the fire department after college.

A dedication ceremony for the memorial in Daisytown will be held at the memorial site on Pike Run Drive at 10:30 a.m. Saturday.