

Hanover Resident Receives Governor's Award For National Service

Written by Administrator

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Julie Brawner's commitment to providing support to residents of Scott county in Hanover has yielded significant results in helping the community reduce the drop-out rate, and has distinguished her service as a member of the Scott County AmeriCorps program. It was for this work that Brawner is this year's recipient of the Governor's Award for National Service. The Governor's Awards for Volunteer Service are Indiana's most prestigious awards celebrating the accomplishments of dedicated volunteers and practitioners from across the State. An individual is nominated in each of the seven categories of national service, youth, service-learning, faith-based, government service, and lifetime achievement.

As this year's recipient, Brawner will be honored at the 6th Annual Governor's Conference on Service and Volunteerism in Indianapolis on October 29th, during a special luncheon ceremony. This year's awards will be presented by Miss America, Katie Stam, a resident of Seymour Indiana, and First Lady Cheri Daniels, wife of Governor Mitch Daniels.

In the short time Brawner has served with the Scott County AmeriCorps program, since October of 2008, she has assisted the Scott County Attendance Review Board in developing a system for tracking students and their subsequent attendance after receiving a review. Brawner follows-up with all students and their families at several week intervals after their Review Board appointment, to verify that students are going to school and following their actions plans. Julie also helped with the GED program and the high school credit recovery program as part of the Drop Out Prevention comprehensive plan.

Brawner's impact and service to this community has been significant. Her follow-up with the over 90 families referred to the Scott County Attendance Review Board required extra effort and has made a difference. While often follow-up only meant a few phone calls to the school, Brawner would sometimes track down families by doing home visits, and doggedly searching for students. In all, Brawner has assisted over 130 adults working on their GEDs during her year of service. The GED students appreciate Julie's caring attitude, and her encouraging spirit. Brawner also assists Second Chance alternative education program, supporting approximately 55 high school age students, who also praise her for her helpful, non-judgmental, and encouraging attitude.

It is no surprise that Brawner's volunteerism extends beyond her AmeriCorps service. Other service activities include; IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, student aid with Reality Stores at both middle schools in the county, EDGE after school program at Scottsburg Middle school, Big Sister in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, Habitat for Humanity, "Circles Campaign" of Scott County, and teaching English to Spanish-speaking residents of Madison, IN.

Jene Bridgewater, educational services director of the Scott County Partnership and Brawner's nominator, sums up Brawner's commitment by stating, "Julie demonstrates a "can-do" attitude. She consistently displays a positive, encouraging attitude wherever she serves. This attitude has encouraged struggling GED students and high school alternative education students." Bridgewater continues, "Her willingness to do whatever needs to be done means that Julie's services were requested and sought for many activities/programs over the course of her year with AmeriCorps."

Brawner will join six other award recipients being recognized for their commitment to civic engagement at the luncheon. "Generations of Hoosiers have been contributing to their communities. There is never a task too great or a job too small. As I travel our state, I am constantly reminded of the positive impact that volunteers make on the quality of life for our neighbors," said Governor Mitch Daniels.