

Yudian Community Service Award



Press Release

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First Yudian Community Service Awards to be presented November 17th

Denver, October 7, 2007

A new community service award will be presented to its first recipients at a ceremony on November 17th at Bethany Lutheran Church, 4500 E Hampden Avenue in Cherry Hills Village. The ceremony will be from 10:00 to 12:00. Eleven high school students who were nominated by their school's counselor or administrator will receive the award this year.

The Yudian Community Service Award recognizes high school students who have demonstrated active and distinguished service to our community. Yudian's purpose in establishing the award was to inspire students to make difference in our community by their volunteer contributions and commitment to community service.

The Yudian Community Service Award is named for Yudian He, a young man who was confined to a wheelchair following an automobile accident immediately after his junior year at George Washington High School in Denver. Due to his subsequent academic accomplishments and selfless community service he received several awards, including the 2006 Minoru Yasui Community Service Award. He donated his entire cash prize to seed a new community service award, and the fund has grown significantly thanks to subsequent donations. Because of his generosity, the new award was named for Yudian.

Yudian moved to the United States from China in 1999. He was 11 years old and did not speak a word of English. After 3 years and a tremendous amount of hard work, he graduated from Denver Merrill Middle School as a "Gold Honor Student". Yudian was accepted into the International Baccalaureate program at George Washington High School and the Pro-engineering Program at the Community College in Denver.

On June 24, 2004, Yudian was a passenger in an automobile that was involved in a serious accident and had to be airlifted to Swedish Hospital Intensive Care Unit. He spent three and a half months in Swedish and Craig Rehabilitation Hospital for surgery, recovery and rehabilitation, but was rendered quadriplegic by a spinal cord injury. Through his determination Yudian gradually regained the use of his fingers and his hands to power his wheelchair. Six months after this life-changing event, Yudian returned to George Washington High School where he received straight "A"s for his first semester. Even after what he had been through, Yudian found it in his heart to give back to those who had helped him through this grueling experience. He began visiting Craig Hospital, talking to the recently injured. He was invited by Great Wall Chinese Academy to be a voluntary assistant teacher. "Just because you are disabled, it doesn't mean you can not contribute to society," said Yudian.

Yudian graduated from George Washington High School On May 23, 2006 as a "Top Ten All Around Student". He had received 17 awards for Outstanding Academic Achievement, High School Leadership and Community Services after becoming disabled. Yudian is now a student at the University of California at Berkeley.

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