

Youth Venture – New England

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Colby College Student Wins \$10,000 for Service Project that Precedes President Obama's Call to Action

CONCORD, NH – Jan 21, 2009 – Newly sworn-in President Barack Obama has promised to make community service a cornerstone of his administration. On the eve of his inauguration he commemorated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by taking part in a volunteer service project and quoted the great civil rights leader saying, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."

Jenny Chen, a freshman at Colby College, has been recognized for addressing social issues through an art-based youth magazine she and her brother Jack produce. The sibling duo launched the Youth Venture Team JJ Express in 2007 to give "artists an opportunity to use their skills for community advancement and encourage them to try different mediums that they haven't tried before," said Jenny. "I hope that JJ Express, which puts serious issues in a lighter and more digestible format, will help ease the pain that these teens feel and to let them know that change is possible."

JJ Express is among the 15 Youth Venture Teams chosen to receive a \$10,000 grant from the Best Buy @15 Challenge with Youth Venture. They will use the grant to reach out to youth from lower income families by setting up a foundation that offers free magazine copies to inner city schools and youth organizations in third world countries. To learn more about JJ Express, go to www.jjexpressmagazine.org.

Over seventy Teams competed in the Best Buy @ 15 Challenge. "The fifteen winning Teams are excellent examples of Venture Teams who started with a \$1,000 grant and turned it into a long-lasting Venture that has touched the entire community. Their dreams to expand their Ventures are now possible, which will lead to an even larger impact in their community, and all over the world," said Gretchen Zucker, Executive Director of Youth Venture. "We are so proud of what each and every Team has accomplished."

The finalists were judged by the public on their project's creativity, community impact, and sustainability. The Venture Teams address a wide variety of issues ranging from poverty to the environment, arts, children, and disaster relief. To view the results and a complete list of the finalists visit www.genv.net/bestbuy.

About Youth Venture

Ashoka's Youth Venture® is a global movement of young changemakers. Youth Venture inspires and invests in teams of young people as they start their own sustainable social ventures, connecting them into a powerful global network. Collectively, these young changemakers are redefining the youth years as a time of initiative and positive change. For more information, please visit www.GenV.net.

About Ashoka

Ashoka is the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs—individuals with innovative and practical ideas for addressing social needs. Working with these social entrepreneurs, Ashoka builds communities of innovators who work collectively to transform society and design new ways for the social sector to become more productive, entrepreneurial and globally integrated. For more information, please visit www.ashoka.org.

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