



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOST CARING PEOPLE IN AMERICA NAMED

Caring Institute Names 2008 Inductees to the Hall of Fame for Caring Americans

Washington, DC – Senator and former Majority Leader, Robert J. Dole, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Caring Institute, today announced the winners of the 2008 National Caring Awards.

Five remarkable adults and five youths will be honored during the National Caring Awards ceremony at 6:00 p.m. on April 7 at the Marriott Wardman Hotel in Washington, DC.

"On behalf of our board of trustees, it is a great honor for us to pay tribute to these extraordinary people who have used their lives for the betterment of others. They are wonderful role models and the very personification of caring," said Senator Dole.

The Caring Institute's mission is to promote the values of caring, integrity and public service. It was founded in 1985 by Val J. Halamandaris after a meeting with Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Mother Teresa said that there was a poverty of the spirit in the developed world which was much worse than the poverty of the body seen in the third world and directed Halamandaris to do something about it. Halamandaris put in place an awards program and a system for identifying people who give back to society in extraordinary ways and holding them up as role models to be identified by others. The Caring Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

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The 2008 Annual Caring Award winners include:

Dick Grace

Founder, Grace Family Vineyards
St. Helena, CA

Dick Grace left behind a successful career as a stockbroker 30 years ago to establish **Grace Family Vineyards**. His goal was not retirement or a life of ease, but entrepreneurial philanthropy. His high-quality wines sell for \$250-\$1,000 a bottle – one went for \$100,000 at auction. Grace has to date donated more than \$25 million in profits, which have been used to help ill, abused, or homeless people the world over. Grace has built schools and hospitals, as well as made countless personal visits to the people he assists. “My wine,” he says, “is a vehicle for what I want to do with my life. My task is to raise consciousness to help my fellow man.”

Sister Adele O’Sullivan, MD

Medical Director, Health Care for the Homeless
Phoenix, AZ

Adele O’Sullivan’s dream of serving God by helping humanity led her to join the Order of Carondelet 31 years ago and fired her subsequent decision to become a doctor. Today, the lady known as the “Mother Teresa of Phoenix” runs the non-profit **Health Care for the Homeless**. Her organization has a clean, well-equipped clinic and medical vans staffed by professionals which seek out the needy in the community. In order to help still more, she has founded another nonprofit called **Circle the City**. “It gives me life,” she explains, “to watch someone who’s suffering and make it better.”

Greg Porter

Founder of God’s Katrina Kitchen
Gulfport, MS

Greg Porter took the devastation of Hurricane Katrina personally. He moved to the Mississippi Gulf, set up a huge tent, and founded **God’s Katrina Kitchen**. Then he began to feed the homeless and hungry, preparing more than 3,000 meals a day. For over two years, he rarely saw his family. Working day and night, he persuaded churches from 22 religious denominations to donate truck loads of food, recruited over 13,000 volunteers, served thousands of meals and helped build hundreds of homes for the homeless. “This wasn’t my vision,” he explains, “God grew it.”

Rev. Cecil Williams

Founder, Glide Memorial Methodist Church
San Francisco, CA

Reverend Cecil Williams became pastor of **Glide Memorial Church** in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District in 1963. Parishioners were few because they feared going through the throngs of drug addicts, prostitutes, winos, homeless, and sick people who lined the streets. Reverend Williams did what Jesus would have done – bring everyone inside. He made it clear that everyone was equal in God’s eyes. He raised funds and created more than 80 programs ranging from housing to health care, from meals to education tailored to meet the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of each

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of the thousands of people who have crossed his threshold. "Everyone can come here," he says, "Everybody is our kind. That's the church it seems to me."

John Wooden

Former Coach, UCLA Bruins

Los Angeles, CA

John Wooden is well known as the coach of the UCLA basketball team who won an unimaginable 10 national titles. Some years he did this with great talent and other years with average talent. The secret to his success, he explains, is that he lived his life according to the Golden Rule, and he inspired – even insisted – that those who played for him do the same. In short, he took caring to a high art. It was not something he had to think about consciously; it was just part of who he was. His instruction to his teams was only minimally about basketball. In the main, it was about how to succeed as a human being and score in the game of life. "You should never try to be better than anyone else," he says. "You should keep learning from others, and you should always try to be the best you can be."

The 2008 Annual Caring Award Young Adult winners include:

Jami Harper

Founder, H2Owood Squares

Age 19

Grand Island, NE

Jami is an environmental activist who makes her cause fun. "I like to find things people can relate to," she says, "because it helps them think in a different light." She's urged children to save resources in a book based on the board game Candy Land. Teens may think twice about lighting up if they play her educational game on smoking's harmful effects. And we all might worry more about clean water after joining in H2Owood Squares, based on the show Hollywood Squares. Jami invented the game after hearing about tainted water in her community, and she's presented it at hundreds of schools. H2Owood Squares, as she explains, teaches us how to protect our water. "If just one water supply is spared from contamination because of my activity, I would consider it a success."

Alexandra Holderman

Founder, Baby Bundles

Age 14

Mishawaka, IN

Alexandra goes shopping every year for lots of babies. She's too young to have her own kids, but not too young to think "you should share your blessings." That's a lesson she learned from her mom, and she's acted on it since age five. In the past nine years, she's assembled over 2,000 "baby bundles" for teenage mothers in need. The bundles contain all the clothes and blankets she can afford using her own allowance and support from businesses in her community. There's no question store managers like her fundraising letters and sense her inner drive. Despite her age,

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Alexandra already knows the meaning of life. “God puts each of us on earth for a purpose,” she says, “and after you fulfill it he sends you home.”

Dallas Jessup

Founder, Just Yell Fire

Age 16

Vancouver, WA

Dallas has a hard punch and a soft heart. You can see both in her free self-defense video “Just Yell Fire.” She decided to make it after hearing about the abduction and death of a young Florida girl. Dallas knew she could help girls like this one since she has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. Drawing on her martial arts skills, she created a simple self-defense strategy, wrote a script, and raised \$500,000. The result was a major production that’s been seen online by 2 million viewers in 37 countries, including Iraq. Many American girls get to learn about self-defense from Dallas herself because she speaks often at schools and youth clubs. “You can’t change everything,” Dallas knows, “but you can change the one thing that is really on your heart.”

Ashlee Kephart

Founder, Kids for a Better World

Age 16

Brooklyn Center, MN

Ashlee has a special way of remembering those in need. As founder of Kids for a Better World, she donates books, household items, and shoes to thousands of people in Africa and the U.S. Many are orphans and disaster victims, who find comfort in her “caring bags” full of socks, snacks, toiletries, and cards saying, “I CARE ABOUT YOU.” Ashlee does all this because she knows, “Caring means identifying with someone you’ve never met.” She brings this same empathy to her recent book about coping with her father’s death. *A Special Way of Remembering* speaks to children who’ve lost a parent with this simple but moving advice: “We shouldn’t forget somebody important in our lives. Think about those people and, while you are remembering, do what you love to do.”

Vasanth Kuppaswamy

Founder, Tamil Nadu India School Fund

Age 18

Charleston, SC

Vasanth inspires Indian children to learn. He’s been teaching them English since he was 12 and raising money for them since he was 14. As founder of the Tamil Nadu India School Fund, he has collected over \$60,000 for schools in the rural village where his father grew up. Thanks to Vasanth, students who once sat on cement floors now have benches and desks. He’s also given them a science lab, athletic fields, and a water filtration system. Much of this became possible thanks to his generous supporters, many of them young American students. While Vasanth appreciates their donations, he reminds them that philanthropy is not just fundraising. So find a way to give of yourself, he says. “Any teen can put their mind to something and make a difference.”

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The Caring Institute operates a museum, the Hall of Fame for Caring Americans, located in what was the first Washington, DC, home of the human rights advocate Frederick Douglass. Caring Award winners are inducted into this Hall of Fame, located three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol, at 320 A Street, NE, Washington, DC.

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