

PRESS RELEASE

June 21, 2017

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR AVIKA BANSAL RECIPIENT OF THE 2017 PRUDENTIAL “SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY” AWARD



Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold (right), presents the Board’s Commendation to Avika Bansal (left), at the Caldwell Town Hall.
PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Caldwell, NJ) – During a special presentation held at the Caldwell Town Hall in Caldwell, New Jersey, on Wednesday, June 21, 2017, Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold honored Avika Bansal for winning the 2017 Prudential “Spirit of the Community” Award.

Freeholder Sebold presented the Board’s Commendation to Avika for her unwavering dedication to giving back to the community. During the presentation, she stated how Avika has exemplified the meaning of leadership through her unwavering dedication to service. She explained, “The world needs more people like Avika.” Avika thanked Freeholder Sebold for the Commendation, sharing her plans of continuing to give back to her community and make a difference.

Avika, a sophomore at Livingston High School, has been collecting and donating essential items for people in need since she was very young. She started her efforts in 2009 to help shoeless children like those she had seen on a trip to India and has dedicated countless hours to her collections.

Avika organized drives that have gathered 5,000 pairs of shoes, 1,000 pounds of food, toiletries, and more. She has also completed over 1,000 hours of community service, organized charity drives to collect nearly 400 pounds of food for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, and collected warm winter clothes for Clearway Missionary Baptist Church in Newark.

Furthermore, she organized Career Clothing Charity Collections for Covenant House in Newark, collected nearly \$50,000 worth of business clothes for donation, and organized a toiletry collection drive for Typhoon Philippine victims in 2013. Avika organized shoe drives for Rutherford Church and Covenant House from 2007 to 2013 and created a community fundraiser at NJFA (a non-profit fencing club). She has volunteered as an Online Science Coach for North South Foundation and raised \$1,800 for the education of disadvantaged kids in India.

She has received numerous awards, including: the President's "Volunteer Service GOLD" Award in 2015 and 2017 for completing over 500 hours of community service; the "Excellence in Community Service" Award from the Township of Livingston in 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016; the "Livingston Mayor's Plaque" for community service in 2014 and 2017; and the New Jersey Governor's Recognition Letter for volunteering to aid those affected by Hurricane Sandy in 2013. Additionally, she initiated the President's Service Award Association in Livingston to motivate young volunteers and the Kiwanis's Builder's Club in 2014.

In the future, she looks forward to her continued involvement and leadership in making communities a better place for all. Avika has one younger sister, Anusha (12), and is the proud daughter of Charu Bansal and Kapil Bansal.

For Additional Information:
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