



Local Virtual Academy Student Wins State Volunteer Award

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Second Grader Recognized for his passion, hard work and service to his community

Today the Florida Virtual Academy (FLVA)--an innovative public school program--announced that Zach Bonner, FLVA student and resident of Valrico, has received the National Point of Light Award from the Florida Volunteer Foundation (<http://www.volunteerfloridafoundation.org/>) for his exemplary volunteer service to his community.

Chosen from hundreds of nominees, Bonner founded the *Little Red Wagon Foundation Inc.* which is a non-profit charity that works on a number of projects to help kids (<http://www.littleredwagonfoundation.com/>).

"It all started after Hurricane Charley," said Zach Bonner. "I felt bad for all the people who were hurt by the hurricane and I asked my mom if we could donate the water from our hurricane kit to families that needed it more. Then I decided to take my red wagon around the neighborhood and asked others for donations too. I did collections for several months and soon we had 27 truckloads! After Hurricane Katrina I felt bad for all the kids that lost all of their toys. I knew if it was me I would really be sad and I knew that all the money had to go to food and stuff. So I asked everyone in the community to donate toys and arts and crafts, and games. I filled up a U-Haul and we took it to the shelters in Baton Rouge."

Bonner, who is 7 years old and in the second grade at the Florida Virtual Academy, will receive a congratulatory letter from Governor Jeb Bush and a certificate acknowledging his leadership.

"I like getting to pick different projects that are important to me. After Hurricane Katrina I felt bad for all the kids that lost all of their toys. I knew if it was me I would really be sad and I knew that all the money had to go to food and stuff. I collected about \$650 and gave it to the Red Cross but I still didn't feel better. So I asked everyone in the community to donate toys and arts and crafts, and games. I filled up a U-Haul and we took it to the shelters in Baton Rouge. That made me feel good and I know it made the kids feel better too," said Bonner.

"I want to thank everyone involved for this award--I couldn't have done it without the help of my family and everyone in my community. It feels good to be recognized but more importantly, I hope that other kids my age get inspired to help their communities," said Bonner.

The Florida Virtual Academy (FLVA) is an innovative public school program where students work at home with a parent or other responsible adult. Each student is assigned a certified public school teacher who operates remotely. Teachers provide instruction and guidance, and work in close partnership with the parents. In 2003, through the Florida Department of Education public virtual school pilot program, the Florida Virtual Academy began offering hundreds of families statewide an innovative option in public education that merged technology with the high-quality, nationally acclaimed K12 learning program. The curriculum covers traditional subjects of math, Language Arts/English, science, history, art, and music. The school currently serves approximately 500 students in grades K-8 from across the state. For more information on the Florida Virtual Academy, parents can call 904-721-0035 or visit www.FLVA.org