



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Press Release: Stewart-Cousins Honors 13 Year Old Jake Gallin of New Rochelle, Named as One of America's Top Youth Volunteers

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 4, 2015



Albany, NY - With a Resolution in the State Senate, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Senate Democratic Leader, recognized 13 year old Jake Gallin of New Rochelle for being named as one of America's top 10 youth volunteers by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards\* for his volunteer work on behalf of military families. Jake was nominated by Volunteer New York and selected by the Prudential Foundation as a National Honoree from a field of more than 33,000 youth volunteers from across the country.

“Jake Gallin’s efforts to recognize the sacrifices made by military families, whether they have a loved one serving in the military currently, or have lost a family member who made the ultimate sacrifice, is exemplary” said Senator Stewart-Cousins. “He continues to volunteer his time, to raise money and awareness with his ‘Stars for Cars’ initiative, and as a result, he has received well-deserved national, and now state recognition.”

The seventh grader at the Albert Leonard Middle School in New Rochelle created “Stars for Cars,” a fundraising and outreach initiative for military families. Jake has raised more than \$19,000 for the USO (United Service Organization) by selling star-shaped magnets for cars that honor military families. The magnets are sold online at [www.starsforcars.org](http://www.starsforcars.org).

Jake thanked Senator Stewart-Cousins for the honor. “It was great - a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I was so glad to be there, to take part in it. I’m so grateful.”

Jake’s parents, Ally and Tom, accompanied him. Jake’s father said, “It’s another milestone for Jake and another platform for Jake to get his message out. For the Senator to take her time to do such a thing is phenomenal.”

Jake’s inspiration for the initiative occurred in 2011, when he was 8 years old. He was watching a tv talk show, and heard the First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, the Vice-President’s wife, talking about the needs of military families. Teresa Arciola of Elmsford, a Gold Star mother who lost her son Michael in Iraq in 2005, was also on the program. Jake will tell you that Mrs. Obama reminded the audience that 1 percent of our country is protecting the other 99 percent. Jake took it to heart. He started “Stars for Cars” to raise awareness of the sacrifices military families make here at home while a loved one is serving in the military (a Blue Star family) or is lost while serving in the military (a Gold Star family).

Jake has also reached out to schools across New York State to make the “3 Holidays Announcements,” on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Patriot Day (9/11). The message is, “We take this time to remember our ‘Blue and Gold Star’ military families and thank them for their sacrifice, generosity, and we want them to know that we are part of their community.” Over 100 schools and districts in New York State have signed on to make these public announcements. Senator Stewart-Cousins delivered the Veteran’s Day announcement with Jake at his school last November.

Jake was nominated by Volunteer New York for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award. He plans to donate the personal award of \$5,000 to Volunteer New York and another \$5,000 grant he also got from the Prudential Foundation to the USO. [View Senator Stewart-Cousins Remarks.](#)

\*The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a national youth recognition program sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).