

2019 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 21

BY SENATOR PETERSON

COMMENDATIONS. Commends Nikki Leali on being named a State Honoree in Louisiana for the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend Nikki Leali on being named a State Honoree in Louisiana for the 2019  
3 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

4 WHEREAS, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program represents the  
5 United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service; and

6 WHEREAS, all public and private middle and high schools in the country, as well  
7 as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs,  
8 and affiliates of Points of Light's HandsOn Network, were eligible to select a student or  
9 member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award; and

10 WHEREAS, this prestigious award presented by Prudential Financial, Inc. in  
11 partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, honors young  
12 volunteers across the country who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to  
13 serving their communities; and

14 WHEREAS, the nationwide program, in its twenty-fourth year, recognizes young  
15 people for outstanding, self-initiated community service; and

16 WHEREAS, Nikki Leali, a thirteen-year-old seventh grader at Ursuline Academy  
17 organized a reading club partnering middle level students with younger children once a  
18 month to read and work on craft projects; and

1           WHEREAS, Nikki also conducted an annual book donation and swap drive for  
2 several years that redistributed more than fifty-five thousand books in her community; and

3           WHEREAS, when she was six years old, Nikki won a small city grant to host a  
4 neighborhood book exchange in conjunction with the national Little Free Library initiative;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, each year she continued to collect and give away books to encourage  
7 reading and literacy, and eventually became a volunteer at the New Orleans Public Library;  
8 and

9           WHEREAS, while volunteering one Saturday in 2017, Nikki came up with the idea  
10 of starting a reading club to "provide opportunities for younger children to feel confident  
11 reading in a safe and fun environment and to encourage middle school students to serve their  
12 community"; and

13           WHEREAS, Nikki recruited fellow middle school students to join her club and  
14 invited kids from ages two to nine to attend monthly gatherings through social media; and

15           WHEREAS, initially, meetings of the "Crescent City Reading Buddies" club were  
16 held at places like pet stores and coffee shops, but the club found a regular home at a library  
17 branch with each meeting featuring a different theme, a hands-on craft project, and reading  
18 time; and

19           WHEREAS, attendance was meager at first, but since creating a website and  
20 providing incentives from corporate sponsors, between fifteen and thirty children regularly  
21 attend club meetings and Nikki hopes to eventually hold club meetings at additional library  
22 branches around New Orleans; and

23           WHEREAS, this extraordinary young woman exemplifies the spirit of community  
24 that is so important to the future of our state and country; and

25           WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities,  
26 and the overall vitality of American society depends, in great measure, upon the dedication  
27 of young people like Nikki Leali who use their compassion and considerable talent to assist  
28 others.

29           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana  
30 does hereby commend and congratulate Nikki Leali on being chosen as one of the State

