

## Challenge Award

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Recently, the KCCVS honored the recipients of the 2010 Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and Service at a ceremony in Frankfort. The awards program pays tribute to the thousands of hours of volunteer and national service that your neighbors give to improve local communities.

One of the award categories is the Challenge Award. This award "recognizes an individual who has overcome significant personal obstacles in order to engage in volunteer service. These obstacles may include anything from physical and/or mental challenges to significant time constraints."

Historically, the majority of the nominees for this award have a significant physical and/or mental challenges that qualifies them for consideration. Sometimes, however, nominations are made for individuals with other life challenges who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to volunteering and community service despite obstacles that would have prevented most of us from taking care of our own needs, much less volunteering to help others with theirs.



Such was the case with the 2008 Challenge Award recipient. Mark Neblett of Mount Washington in Bullitt County is passionate about suicide prevention and keeping kids safe on the Internet. Neblett lobbied legislators to pass a law that protects children from cyberbullies and cyberpredators. The final passage of HB 91, the Bully Bill, was, in part, due to the public awareness he brought to the issue after the suicide deaths of his 17-year-old daughter, Rachael, and her friend, Kristin.

In 2009, the winning nominee for the Challenge Award was honored for volunteering an incredible amount of time to his community, even though he has a significant hearing impairment. Jimmy Tincher from Carlisle in Nicholas County volunteered more than 35 hours per week for various programs at Nicholas County High School, his church and the courthouse, along with working 10 hours a week at the local newspaper, The Carlisle Mercury. Tincher has volunteered in his community for more than 25 years – all without transportation, walking to all his volunteer locations without complaint.



There was a tie for the 2010 Challenge Award. Both recipients overcame significant physical limitations to volunteer in their respective communities. Jana Buxton serves her community at a local women's shelter despite having to deal with issues related to multiple sclerosis. Tom Stokes, who uses a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury, serves his community by volunteering as head chef for a biannual camp for children with special needs and by reaching out to others with physical disabilities. Both individuals are living proof that despite physical challenges, one can still lead a full and productive life.

To learn more about any of the award recipients or about the awards program itself, visit the [KCCVS website](#).

These are only a few examples of the amazing people who have overcome significant personal obstacles and still find ways to engage in volunteer service. If you know of someone who contributes to your community, has overcome a significant personal obstacle -- anything from physical and/or mental challenges to significant time constraints--in order to engage in volunteer service, consider nominating them for the 2011 Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and Service. The call for nominations will be announced at the end of January 2012. Remember, no matter how extraordinary a person or group's accomplishments are, someone must complete a nomination form for them to be considered.



So, during the next few months, look around in your community and identify someone you might nominate for an award. It's a great way to say "thank you" for all they do despite significant personal obstacles. Who knows, someone might even be watching you as you go about volunteering in your community.