

HONORING THE 2002 AAA SCHOOL SAFETY PATROL LIFESAVING MEDAL AWARD WINNERS

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I am proud to announce to the Senate today the names of the young men and women who have been selected to receive special awards from the American Automobile Association. Six safety patrollers will receive the 2002 AAA School Safety Patrol Lifesaving Medal Award, the highest honor given to members of the school safety patrol. They are in Washington, DC, today to receive their awards, and I wanted to say how proud we are of them all.

There are roughly 500,000 members of the AAA School Safety Patrol in this country, helping in over 50,000 schools. Every day, these young people ensure that their peers arrive safely at school in the morning, and back home in the afternoon.

Most of the time, they accomplish their jobs uneventfully. But, on occasion, these volunteers must make split-second decisions, placing themselves in harm's way to save the lives of others. The heroic actions of this year's recipients exemplify this selflessness.

The first AAA Lifesaving Medal recipient comes from Alexandria, MN.

On January 11, 2002, 12-year-old Kathryn DelZoppo, a captain on St. Mary's Catholic School Safety Patrol, was at her post with four other patrol team members. Even though the duty period was almost over, Kathryn remained alert and kept watch over her team.

As one member of the team approached a busy intersection, a child ran past him, into the street, and into the path of a swiftly approaching vehicle. Thinking fast, Kathryn grabbed the child's jacket and pulled him back to the safety of the curb.

This year's second AAA Lifesaving Medal honoree comes from Manassas, VA.

On September 20, 2001, Weems Elementary School Safety Patrol Ernesto Navarrette, age 11, was on duty at the bus circle with six other patrols and a teacher. Ernesto scanned the area for possible safety hazards as students climbed onto their buses.

A pick-up truck parked in the grass nearby began to back up, but no one could hear the truck's engine over the noise of the children and buses. Only Ernesto saw the truck backing up toward a fellow patrol member, who had her back to the moving truck. He yelled to the patrol to move out of the way. She did, just in time.

The next AAA Lifesaving Medal winners come from Lancaster, OH.

On November 21, 2001, Sandersen Elementary School Safety Patrols Justin Wright, age 13, and Ethan Trush, age 12, were on duty on opposite sides of a crosswalk outside their school. After checking for oncoming traffic, Justin and Ethan allowed a third grader to cross the street.

Just then, a car left the school grounds, speeding and fishtailing as it approached the crosswalk. Ethan spot-

ted the car just as the younger student reached the middle of the crosswalk. He yelled out a warning to Justin and then quickly moved to safety. Justin immediately dashed into the road and pulled the third grader out of the street, barely escaping being hit by the oncoming car.

The fifth AAA Lifesaving Award recipient comes from Westfield, NJ.

On October 16, 2001, Franklin Elementary School Safety Patrol Matthew Printz, age 11, was at his usual post outside the school with fellow patrols and a school crossing guard.

Signaling traffic to continue, the crossing guard called to the patrols to hold back any students approaching the intersection. Just as traffic began to move, however, a student stepped around Matthew and into the street. Matthew immediately grabbed the strap of the student's backpack and pulled him out of the street just in time to avoid being hit.

The sixth AAA Lifesaving Award honoree is from Fairfax, VA.

On March 7, 2002, 11-year-old Greg Whitaker, captain of the Fairhill Elementary School Safety Patrol, was walking with a first-grade student toward their homes after fulfilling his school bus patrol duties.

A man pulled up in his van and blocked the boys' path. The man got out of his van and started to ask the little boy several questions, including where he lived. Greg immediately said in a loud voice, "We need to go home!" He took the first-grader's hand, and walked the boy directly home. Before the van pulled away, Greg committed the license plate number, the van, and the driver to memory.

Safely home, Greg called his patrol sponsor for further guidance. The sponsor called the local police, and was told there was a warrant out for the man's arrest. Greg's quick thinking and courage saved himself and the younger boy from a wanted felon.

In addition to honoring safety patrollers with the Lifesaving Medal Award, AAA also recognizes the School Safety Patroller of the Year. This award is presented to patrollers who perform duties above and beyond their normal responsibilities and demonstrate outstanding leadership, dependability, and academic strength.

This year, the Safety Patroller of the Year goes to Kaitlin McLoughlin, age 14, an 8th grader and Safety Patrol Captain at Our Shepherd Lutheran School in Birmingham, MI.

Usually, students have to be in eighth grade to be a safety patrol captain. Kaitlin was allowed to join a year early, however, after submitting an impressive essay and completing an interview process. She was also chosen captain of her patrol team the following year.

Kaitlin's principal describes her as "dependable, clear thinking, calm, and well-respected by students and teachers alike."

Kaitlin's responsibilities include keeping a weekly record of her safety

squad, raising and lowering the school flag, and keeping track of the safety belts and ponchos. When she is on duty, she is responsible for locking one of the school doors after the final bell rings in the morning. She must also organize her squad and assign duty stations monthly.

Recently, the faculty chose Kaitlin to attend the Birmingham Optimist Club breakfast for outstanding area students. She has also served as a kindergarten and computer classroom aide, and assisted with photography for the school website.

Kaitlin is co-captain of the cheering squad, vice-president of the student council, co-chairman of the 7th-8th grade dance, and sings in the choir. She is Mistress of Ceremonies for the school talent show and serves as hostess for Lutheran Schools' Week. Kaitlin also works with the local food bank and on various school fundraisers. She is active in her church youth group, cheerfully volunteers her services when asked and often seeks out other opportunities to serve.

She and all of the other AAA winners deserve our thanks and applause.

On behalf of the Senate, I extend congratulations and thanks to these young women. They are assets to their communities, and their families and neighbors should be very proud of their courage and dedication.

I would also like to recognize the American Automobile Association for providing the supplies and training necessary to keep the safety patrol on duty nationwide.

Since the 1920's, AAA clubs across the country have been sponsoring student safety patrols to guide and protect younger classmates against traffic accidents. Easily recognizable by their fluorescent orange safety belt and shoulder strap, safety patrol members represent the very best of their schools and communities. Experts credit school safety patrol programs with helping to lower the number of traffic accidents and fatalities involving young children.

We owe AAA our gratitude for their tireless efforts to ensure that our Nation's children arrive to and from school safe and sound. And we owe our thanks to these exceptional young men and women for their selfless actions. The discipline and courage they displayed deserves the praise and recognition of their schools, their communities and the Nation.

SUZANNE PEARSON RETIREMENT

Mr. THURMOND. Madam President, I am proud to have co-sponsor with Senator BYRD a resolution which the Senate adopted on April 30 commending Ms. Suzanne Pearson, who retired from the Senate on December 31, 2001. While serving as President pro tempore of the Senate, I had the pleasure of overseeing the work of the Office of the Legislative Counsel and, in particular, of working with Suzanne in her position as Office Manager.