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Derry teen honored as Huggable Hero

DERRY — A Derry student was honored recently for being a hero.

Dylan Mahalingam, 14, a sophomore at Pinkerton Academy, was honored as one of only 10 students from around the United States and Canada to be named a Huggable Hero by the Build-A-Bear Workshop organization.

Students were honored for demonstrating outstanding leadership, dedication and compassion to making the world a better place.

Dylan cofounded the organization Lil' MDGs to help meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. He has rallied more than 20,000 youth volunteers from 40 countries to work together to raise more than \$780,000 for tsunami relief.

His mobilization efforts also have raised funds to build schools, dorms, libraries, playgrounds and community gardens in several countries, including Uganda, Indonesia, Cambodia, India and Sudan.

As a Huggable Hero, Dylan is part of a group of young leaders who are making a difference. Examples of other Huggable Hero causes include supporting military troops, advocating for literacy, raising funds and awareness for medical advances, helping build and fund schools and orphanages in underdeveloped countries, and inspiring and mobilizing other youth to help make the world a better place.

Collectively, these dedicated young people have raised funds and collected items valued at more than \$22.5 million, and they volunteer more than 650 hours of their time each month.

Dylan recently attended the 2010 Huggable Heroes event in St. Louis, where he participated in workshops and received his award. He will receive scholarship money and also money to donate to a charity of his choice as part of the award.

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