

2011-J3345

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Christopher Yao, of Jericho, New York, upon the occasion of his designation as a State Honoree in the 17th Annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to act, in accord with its long-standing traditions, honoring the youth of today, and leaders of tomorrow, whose character and achievements exemplify the ideals and values cherished by this great State and nation; and

WHEREAS, Christopher Yao has distinguished himself as a young man of superlative ability, establishing a high standard of community service, purposefulness of life, and sense of responsibility rarely achieved in youthful years; and

WHEREAS, Christopher Yao, age 15, of Jericho, New York, and a sophomore at Jericho High School, has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service by being named a 2012 Prudential Spirit of Community State Honoree; he was nominated for this high honor by Jericho High School; and

WHEREAS, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, created in 1995 by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), are designed to emphasize the importance our nation places on service to others, and to encourage all young Americans to contribute to their communities; and

WHEREAS, As one of only two New York State Honorees, Christopher Yao will receive a monetary award, an engraved silver medallion, and a trip to Washington, D.C., May 5-8, 2012, for a series of national recognition events; and

WHEREAS, Christopher Yao developed an annual "read-a-thon" which has paid for 60 cleft-lip surgeries in developing countries; he then created a nonprofit organization which has established a center for orphans in

Kenya, provided educational materials to students around the world, and helped other young people start their own charitable fundraising programs; and

WHEREAS, Christopher Yao was diagnosed with a jaw-bite problem in sixth grade, and as a result, discovered that others had much more difficult dental challenges than he did; he knows how it feels to go through tough situations and wanted to help others with conditions that were much worse than his; and

WHEREAS, So in 2007, Christopher Yao began going to schools and libraries each year to encourage kids to find donors who would sponsor them in a "read-a-thon" and raise money to fund cleft surgeries for children around the world through the Smile Train organization; and

WHEREAS, In October 2011, Christopher Yao's initiative paid for its 60th operation and also sponsored student trips overseas to witness Smile Train's work; and

WHEREAS, Seeing the power of how young people can change lives, Christopher Yao founded a nonprofit organization, "Kids Change the World," which has partnered with other sponsors and citizens in Kenya to establish an education and care center for children affected by post-election violence; his organization also provides free educational videos and other materials to students through a website and offers support for young people who want to launch their own charitable initiatives in their communities; and

WHEREAS, The success of the State of New York, the strength of our communities, and the vitality of American society depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of young people like Christopher Yao who use their considerable talents and resources to serve others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to honor Christopher Yao, commending him for his outstanding record of volunteer service, peer leadership, and community service and recognizing the value of his labors and the promise of his future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations with praise and pride to commend Christopher Yao for his achievements and to extend to him the best wishes of this Legislative Body for a future of purposeful success and well-being, fully confident of his response to the challenges of a promising future and appreciative of the model he represents for all young people of the Empire State; and be it further RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Christopher Yao.