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NEWS RELEASE

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CRAIG CONGRATULATES **IDAHO CONGRESSIONAL AWARD RECIPIENTS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig congratulated five of Idaho’s Congressional Award Gold Medal Recipients at a ceremony today in Washington, D.C.

Modeled after the Duke of Edinburgh Program from Great Britain and created by an Act of Congress in 1979, the Congressional Award Program promotes and recognizes achievement, initiative and public service in young Americans between the ages of 13 ½ to 24 years. It is a non-competitive, voluntary program that is open to all young people, focusing on three areas: voluntary public service, personal development, physical fitness, and exploration.

“I am proud to have played a part in bringing this phenomenal program to Idaho,” Craig said. “Back in 1993, Senator Dirk Kempthorne and I saw the value of the Congressional Award Program and what it could provide to young Idahoans, and I have enjoyed watching it blossom over the years. Through creative thinking, service, and hard work, these students have reached goals that they might not have achieved had the program not invited and challenged them. I hope that this great program is kept alive and thriving in Idaho, attracting more and more determined young men and women.”

At today’s ceremony, Idaho recipient Mara Truslow of Riverstone International School in Boise held the honor of giving the “Reflection on the Congressional Award” speech. Her parents Penny Robertson and Glen Truslow also attended. Mara created a publication about cancer for teens and started a school newspaper. “I was able to set realistic goals in four areas that enabled me to accomplish many milestones,” Mara said. “The Congressional Award motivated and guided me in my activities.”

Four other Idahoans traveled to Washington, D.C. today to receive their medals. Amanda McGehee is a student at Northwest Nazarene University and hopes to attend medical school. Her parents are Jerry and Kristi McGehee of Orofino. Amanda worked with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game setting up displays and collecting pathology samples from wild trout as part of her service project. “I have learned how one individual can affect a community by performing a few simple everyday jobs, helping others unable to do tasks on their own,”

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Amanda said. “I came to realize that there is a great big world outside of my ‘Life Bubble’ and that I should make an effort to become a part of it. The Congressional Award program provided an opportunity for me to recognize what I can do for a community and how it benefits those that need help. This program also strengthened my self-esteem by showing me how much I affect people’s lives.”

McKay Nield also received his medal today, joined by his parents Myron and Debry Nield. McKay recently graduated from Kimberly High School and will attend Yale this fall. He produced and directed a musical within his high school and developed a photography business to take senior pictures of his classmates. “The Congressional Award program has been an extremely rewarding way of teaching me the importance of staying active in my community, giving selflessly to others, keeping myself healthy and achieving goals,” McKay said. “The lessons I’ve learned will help me be a better student, citizen and person.”

Anna Sali set out to learn about the recording industry in order to compose, perform, and record a self-titled CD. She also volunteered at Kuna High School planning youth activities and programs for the community. “I have learned how to set and complete goals, which has shaped my future in a very profound way,” Anna said. “Many of the goals I had set have led up to a career in music that I pursue today. As I look back to when I started the program, it is obvious it had the most long-term impact out of anything I have yet to be a part of.” Anna is the daughter of Congressman Bill and Terry Sali.

Brittany Ward attends Weber State University and is from Twin Falls. Her parents are Kelly and Jona Ward. Brittany helped provide meals to the elderly residents of an assisted living center. She also plays the piano, runs track and cross country and currently holds the 1-A state championship title in the long jump. “Throughout this entire Congressional Program, I have gained the value of hard work,” Brittany said. “It has helped teach me how to finish things I start. It also assisted me in possible future careers and seeing what environments I enjoy succeeding in.”

Senator Craig and his staff welcomed Idaho’s gold medal recipients to Washington, D.C. this morning for a private reception. Tonight, Senator Craig will attend a Congressional Awards Reception honoring gold medal recipients and honored guests former Senator Trent and Tricia Lott, New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees and actor and former professional wrestler Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson.

Idaho has six other Congressional Award Gold Medal Recipients this year who were unable to travel to Washington, D.C.: John Langdon, Boise; Robyn Watson, Boise; Maryanne Barrot, Kimberly; Rebecca Goodwin, Boise; Grayson Stone, Twin Falls; Dana Wright, Twin Falls.

There will be a local ceremony for the Congressional Award Medal Recipients on August 13th in Boise.