Arkansas teen named DAV’s top youth volunteer, earns $20K scholarship

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) has named Hailey Curnett of Benton, Arkansas, as recipient of the 2019 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship’s top prize of $20,000. Curnett will be presented with the award at DAV’s 98th National Convention August 3, in Orlando, Florida.

The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship program honors eight outstanding young men and women each year for their volunteer support of veterans in the name of DAV through the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program (VAVS) and/or through DAV’s Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP).

“I volunteer at the VA because I love our veterans,” said Curnett. “I am very proud to call myself a volunteer. It has been my identity and remains my identity today.”

Curnett, a high school senior, has volunteered a total of 1,456 hours at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System over the past four years, serving in multiple medical units as well as helping with recreational activities and the hospital’s volunteer transportation office. She graduated with honors this spring from Benton High School, and plans to study nursing and pursue a career with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“This year’s scholarship recipients are an inspiring reminder
that volunteerism—and veterans—are in the hearts of the next generation,” said National Commander Dennis Nixon. “We have seen a decline in volunteerism across the nation, but I believe with compassionate individuals like Ms. Curnett and all of our outstanding awardees, we’re moving in the right direction.”

Named after Marine veteran Jesse Brown, a former VA Secretary and DAV leader who was wounded in Vietnam in 1965, the scholarship award is backed by Ford Motor Company.

Additional scholarship recipients this year are:

Katie Gardner – Fayetteville, Arkansas, $15,000
Joseph Abram – Auburn, Alabama, $10,000
Daniel Finney – Columbia, South Carolina, $7,500
Andre Edwards – Little Rock, Arkansas, $7,500
John Campbell – Greenville, Illinois, $5,000
Mary Elizabeth Entrekin – Gulfport, Mississippi, $5,000
Jasmine Maggard – Norton, Virginia, $5,000

Photos and media of the award presentation may be made available upon request.

About DAV

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill; providing employment resources to veterans and their families
and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with more than 1 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932