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PV Students Win Community Service Award

The student-run PressFriends mentoring organization was named a first place winner in a nationwide contest.

By [John Schreiber](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:00 am

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A Palos Verdes-based student newspaper mentoring organization run by students from across the peninsula was recently named a first place winner in Scholastic's 2012 "Be Big in Your Community" Contest.

PressFriends, which was created by six middle school students in 2008, helps students improve their writing and communication skills by starting school newspapers in their schools.

PressFriends will use the money they received with the award to expand their mentoring programs in the Los Angeles area. New programs include a mentoring program at an elementary school in Lawndale and a USC Kids News program for middle schools surrounding the USC campus.

Since its inception, the organization has been run by students from Palos Verdes and South Bay schools including [Peninsula High School](#), [Palos Verdes High School](#), Chadwick, Mira Costa High School, Vistamar School, [Palos Verdes Intermediate](#) and [Ridgecrest Intermediate](#).

The organization has expanded to more than 200 mentors since 2008 and its volunteers have reached more than 1,000 elementary students in the South Bay. In the 2011-2012 school year alone, PressFriends helped publish 25 schools newspapers, conducted 60 workshops and printed more than 10,000 newspapers.

This year's PressFriends student board members include:

- Luke Southwell
- Tessa Southwell
- Taylor Wirtz
- Tyler Barnett
- Anna Wood
- Mitchell Trainotti
- Jack Solaro
- Edwin Jacobson
- Mary Dawson
- Conor Dawson
- Dragon Siu
- Diamond Naga Siu

- Neema Masoudipour
- Hannah Katagi
- Megan Hokama
- Nina Grove
- Jessica Pedersen
- Taylor Hulahan
- Leonora Meroth
- Elena Ueda
- Kaitlan Tseng
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