



## **Saint Viator Senior Named Top Illinois High School Volunteer**



Janice Guzon standing near one of the EYEsee collection stands at Saint Viator High School.

A simple desire to provide eyeglasses for people in Third World countries has propelled a Saint Viator High School senior into national prominence.

On Tuesday, Janice Guzon, 16, of Hoffman Estates was named the top high school volunteer in the state of Illinois, by officials with the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Guzon's international mission, EYEsee, worked with humanitarian organizations to distribute 7,000 pairs of used glasses she and her classmates collected, to places like Haiti, Honduras, the Philippines, Venezuela, the Congo and small nations in the Pacific.

This year, they have doubled their goal and hope to collect 14,000 eyeglasses as part of the campaign.

"Receiving this award is amazing, but even more wonderful is all the exposure the organization is getting," Guzon says. "More people are getting involved, and as a result understanding the mission of helping to alleviate poverty."

As state honorees, she, along with eighth grader Emily Koulis, 14, of Channahon will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington D.C. for a series of national recognition events.

Guzon and Koulis emerged from the nearly 5,000 local honorees nominated by their schools or organizations and reviewed by an independent judging panel. They now are among 102 state honorees invited to attend an awards ceremony at the Smithsonian, as well as meet with their congressional representative on Capitol Hill.

While in Washington, Guzon stands a chance to be named one of the top 10 youth volunteers in the country, and win an additional \$5,000 award, as well as a \$5,000 grant from the Prudential Foundation for the charitable organization of her choice.

"The future of EYEsee isn't anchored in eyeglasses," Guzon adds. "This isn't just about eyeglasses. It's about making a change and fighting poverty throughout the world."

Already, Guzon has won numerous awards for her international mission, including being selected as one of 40 students nationwide - and one of only five in Illinois - to receive the Nordstrom scholarship, worth \$10,000 toward college.

"It is amazing to me that a student at this age can think with such global perspective," said Eileen Manno, Saint Viator High School principal. "She has this caring concern within

herself that she is able to generate to this whole group of students and humanitarian organizations to jump into action.

“She has affected thousands of people across the world,” Manno added, “that she will never know.”