

PRESENTATION OF
JANE PRATT BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN EDUCATION AWARD

It is a pleasure and honor to be here to present the Jane Pratt Blue Ridge Mountain Education Award on behalf of the Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains was founded over a decade ago to secure and protect the treasured and historic conditions of that mountain range. It is working to preserve and enhance the important ecosystem values, extend the Conservation Corridor, and build stronger support among many stakeholders in the area to assure better stewardship over time. These mountains are an irreplaceable source of fresh water for those of us living down stream. They protect the fertility of our soil. And their range of species are important to the rest of our environment. Protecting this ecosystem also provides fulfilling historic sites for hiking and tourism, so there are many economic and social benefits from this activity. FBRM plays a major role in bringing together many groups to encourage more cooperation and produce successful results. With this award, we are expanding our outreach to students to get more of them involved in these stewardship activities. And we welcome more support from you all to help protect the Blue Ridge and enhance benefits for all of us.

Jane Pratt helped create and expand the FBRM after she had established The Mountain Institute to protect mountains globally. She explained that they focused on the highest, longest, and oldest mountain ranges in the world. We can have a quiz on this later. Jane was granted the Friend of the Mountains Award in 2013, but very sorrowfully, she died before it was presented, so I, as her husband, had the sad honor to receive it on her behalf. She had conceived of the Education award to increase the involvement of young people in protecting the mountains and build longer term commitment. So now this is being given in her honor and memory.

The first Jane Pratt Blue Ridge Mountain Education Award is being granted to Christina Nelson. She has done excellent environmental work here at Loudon Valley High School and beyond, as confirmed by the environmental faculty here. She is the president of the Environment Club and has been involved in many activities supporting the environment. She has produced excellent art to support her environmental work and won prizes, including for an artistic environmental poster. So this is not her first prize, and I am sure it will not be her last.

I now present her this certificate of the Jane Pratt Blue Ridge Mountain Education Award. In addition, she will receive a week at Spruce Knob with The Mountain Institute.

This is the first award, and there will be further awards given annually to promote more student involvement and support for the Blue Ridge.

Thank you Christina and Congratulations.