



### **Idaho Youth Wins National Award for Heroic Service Activity**

**Boulder, CO, September 19, 2023** – Alex Knoll, age 18, of Post Falls, Idaho, has been named a winner of the 2023 **Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes**. The Barron Prize annually honors 25 outstanding young leaders who have made a significant positive impact on people, their communities, and the environment. Fifteen top winners each receive \$10,000 to support their service work or higher education.

Alex created the Ability App, a crowdsourced web app that serves people with disabilities by providing a road map of accessible public spaces and businesses. The app allows users to search mobility, vision, hearing, and cognitive accessibility features at hotels, restaurants, and businesses around the world. It includes ratings, comments, and photos uploaded by anyone interested in supporting accessibility. The app launched in 2020 and is currently available online at [TheAbilityApp.com](http://TheAbilityApp.com). Alex began his work at age 9 after noticing a man in a wheelchair struggling to open a store’s manual door. When he couldn’t find a digital resource the man could have used to research the store’s accessibility features, he decided to create one.

Alex spent several years brainstorming and developing a prototype app and at age 12, was invited onto Ellen DeGeneres’ show. She presented him with a \$25,000 check from Shutterfly to develop his app, and emails of support flooded in from around the world. When he needed more funding, Alex began touring as a keynote speaker, sharing his passion for accessibility and promoting awareness of its importance. He has presented keynotes in Switzerland, Slovakia, and beyond, turning all of his earnings back into his app. His travels have also allowed him to connect with accessibility advocacy groups, people with disabilities, and researchers worldwide. Their insight has helped fine-tune his app and their support has fueled his work. “I’ve learned that when things are important enough to you, you should never give up,” says Alex. “I was told ‘no’ so many times during development of the Ability App but I kept going because I knew it could help so many people.”

The Barron Prize was founded in 2001 by author T. A. Barron and was named for his mother, Gloria Barron. Since then, the Prize has honored more than 500 young people who reflect the great diversity of America. All of them demonstrate heroic qualities like courage, compassion, and perseverance as they work to help their communities or protect the planet.

“Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world,” says T. A. Barron. “And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes – people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Barron Prize: to shine the spotlight on these amazing young people so that their stories will inspire others.”

For more information, visit [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org)

**Media contact:** Liz Ammirato [liz@callprinc.com](mailto:liz@callprinc.com) 914-299-3882  
Cathy Callegari Public Relations, Inc.