

## 40 teens honored with YMCA character awards

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Withrow senior baseball player Dion'te Riley is one of this year's YMCA Character Award winners. / The Enquirer/Jeff Swinger



Written by [Shauna Steigerwald](#)

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### If you go

**What:** 15th annual YMCA Character Awards Event

**When:** 6 p.m. April 17

**Where:** School for Creative & Performing Arts, 108 W. Central Parkway

**Cost:** \$25; \$10 for youth

**Information:** 513-246-3205

Nicole Robertson doesn't use her weekends as an excuse to sleep in.

For the last three years, the Campbell County High School sophomore and swim team member has spent her Saturday mornings at the Northern Kentucky University pool. As a junior coach for the Special Olympics of Northern Kentucky's Northern Kentucky Dolphins swim team, she helps

swimmers with disabilities improve their techniques.

On Sunday mornings, Nicole, 15, volunteers at her church, St. Mary, in Alexandria, doing crafts and activities with preschool-age kids. And several times a month, she volunteers in the ER at St. Elizabeth Fort Thomas, fetching supplies for nurses and doctors and getting patients the things they need.

"I do it because of the impact it makes on everybody else, how it makes everybody else feel better, and the feeling I get," she said of her reason for dedicating so much time to others.

Across the river, Dion'te Riley, a Withrow University High School senior, uses his involvement with baseball as a vehicle to help others, both at home and abroad. Through his Withrow varsity team, he mentors younger kids, ages 4 through 11,

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helping them improve their baseball skills both after school and, last year, at a summer camp.

With his summer team, the Cincinnati Spikes, he traveled to the Dominican Republic in 2008, collecting enough food to fill 17 grocery carts for needy families, reading stories to children and helping raise money to buy uniforms.

"The experience that I had ... it made me more grateful for what I have because down there, they don't really have much," Dion'te, 18, said. "They work for what they have."

Dion'te and Nicole are two of 40 local teens set to receive a YMCA Character Award from the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati on Tuesday during the 15th annual awards event.

"It's a way to celebrate amazing youth in our communities," said Sara Lewis, the YMCA's director of out-of-school-time programs. "It's a night to really bring those youth together and celebrate them and all their amazing accomplishments."

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