

Needham Youth Services

December RAY of Hope Recipient

Ben Tillotson



Left to right: Jon Mattleman, Director Needham Youth Services, Ben Tillotson, December RAY Recipient, and Bob Baker, Owner of Wayland Kitchens in Needham.

December Recipient – Ben Tillotson

Ben is currently a senior at Needham High School. He has made many valuable contributions to his school as a member of the Student Advisory Board to the School Committee, and as President of Student Council. To name a couple, Ben led a school wide drive collecting DVD's for soldiers overseas and organized efforts to eliminate Styrofoam trays in the cafeterias to which the switch will be made next year.

In addition to his involvement in Needham, Ben has spent the past two summer vacations doing volunteer English literacy work in South Africa. The summer before his junior year, Ben worked at a program in Cape Town, and witnessed the incredible impact that English literacy had on the lives of the underprivileged children he worked with. He returned this past summer to Mbotyi—a village in one of the poorest and most remote parts of South Africa—with hundreds of books donated by Pollard students. Working independently, Ben established a literacy center at the local primary school, which is still running and sustainable today. Ben is a captain of the Ski Team, and last year qualified for the state championship. In his free time, Ben likes to ski, catch up on sleep, and spend time with friends.

The RAY of Hope Program (**R**ecognize **A** **Y**outh), created by Needham Youth Services in partnership with the Needham Business Association, was designed to identify young people who have performed outstanding service to the Needham community and/or who by their actions are excellent role models for their peers. Watch the ceremony honoring Ben at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsBIP3DAY5Y>. For more information please visit www.needhamma.gov/youth/ray.

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