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**Ruth Libby 2017 Grand Prize Winner for Rare Life Award**

\$50,000 Goes to Non-Profit that Impacts Children and the Environment

**Portland, ME (Feb. 28, 2017)** -- Eagle Rare Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey has named Ruth Libby of Portland, Maine as the Grand Prize winner of the 2017 Rare Life Award. Eagle Rare will donate \$50,000 to Libby's charity, Ruth's Reusable Resources (3R's), and host an awards ceremony in Portland, Maine on February 28, 2017.

The Rare Life Award is an annual recognition program created to honor individuals who exhibit courage, leadership, survival, devotion, character and heroism. Candidates are nominated by friends, family and colleagues. Their stories and photos are posted online at [www.eaglerarelife.com](http://www.eaglerarelife.com).

**The Ruth Libby Story**

Over two decades ago, Ruth received a note from her son's kindergarten teacher requesting household items such as egg cartons, meat trays and juice can lids for use in craft projects. A light bulb went off for Ruth and her non-profit was born initially in her basement. Its mission is to ensure that students and classrooms in Maine have the basic tools for learning, by transferring surplus business supplies and merchandise into the hands of school children through teachers.

Twenty three years later, the 3R's has blossomed into a regional powerhouse that takes surplus supplies from businesses across the nation and supplements schoolchildren's supplies in basic learning materials. The numbers today are staggering. From a 21,000 square foot warehouse and a 7,000 square foot "store," Libby's organization has to date recycled over \$60 million of office surplus into the hands of teachers across Maine and in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Every year Ruth's Reusable Resources manages an operation that:

- Solicits tons of surplus office supplies from across the country
- Serves over 14,000 eligible teachers at over 250 individual schools
- Donates 5,000 backpacks with school supplies to children in need
- Reaches over 70,000 regional students with needed supplies, or nearly one third of all elementary students in Maine
- Hundreds of tons of office surplus is reused and saved from landfills

More astonishing, Libby's organization provides this service entirely on school "memberships," an annual fee paid by schools that amounts to only \$3 per student. All deliveries and shipment of material is paid for by the 3R's. The warehouse and store are staffed with 85 special needs high school students and adults each week, supplied by 10 different special needs organizations. Staffing is supplemented by volunteer teams organized by local businesses. To say that theirs is a shoestring budget doesn't meet the mark. "Shipping, deliveries and heat are our biggest costs. We usually turn the heat off in February," noted Libby. Spring doesn't arrive in Portland, Maine in February.

Libby said of her award, "This award is potentially a game changer for us. Our growth over the years is really just a response to an enormous need. This award will enable us to reduce our annual costs and possibly for the first time establish an endowment that can keep us helping kids to learn and help reduce waste."

Eagle Rare spokesman Kris Comstock said, "Rarely does a grand prize winner embody all six Rare Life attributes - Courage, Leadership, Heroism, Character, Devotion and Survival - as fully as Ruth Libby continues to demonstrate every day. I would even add imagination and persistence to this list. In addition to meeting a huge need for schoolchildren, she has provided activities for the challenged and charity to the needy while galvanizing businesses and communities to help in her mission. We are inspired by her example and proud to have her as this year's Grand Prize recipient. We couldn't be happier for her."

Eagle Rare also will donate \$5,000 to the charities of choice of the six runners-up, each one embodying a distinct characteristic of leading a Rare Life: Courage, Leadership, Heroism, Character, Devotion and Survival. This is the seventh year for the Rare Life Awards campaign, and the 2017 awards will bring total grants to date to \$400,000 given to 49 different charities.

The six 2017 runner-up winners are:

**Bonney Williams** of Seguin, TX: Character Award for Etosha Rescue

**Christopher Ring** of San Diego, CA: Courage Award for Legacies Alive

**Thomas Penders** of Titusville, FL: Devotion Award for Archeologists for Autism

**Theresa Batchelor** of Morriston, FL: Heroism Award for Beauty's Haven Farm

**Ryan Prior** of Decatur, GA: Leadership Award for Blue Ribbon Fellowship

**Catherine Ritlaw** of Kingman, AZ: Survival Award for Journey's End Ranch Animal Sanctuary

### **About Eagle Rare Bourbon**

Eagle Rare Bourbon Whiskey is part of the award-winning Buffalo Trace Distillery, an American family-owned company based in Frankfort, (Franklin County), Kentucky. The Distillery's rich distilling tradition dates back to 1773 and includes such legends as E.H. Taylor, Jr., George T. Stagg, Albert B. Blanton, Orville Schupp, and Elmer T. Lee. Eagle

Rare Bourbon is a 10-year-old single barrel bourbon that has won multiple awards, including five double gold medals from the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. For more information on the Rare Life Award or Eagle Rare Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, visit [www.eaglerarelife.com](http://www.eaglerarelife.com).

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