



The Wawa Foundation Announces the Four Finalists for 2019 “The Wawa Foundation Hero Award”: Calls for Public Vote to Determine Top Grant Recipient

Four Philadelphia Non-Profits Will Be Celebrated During Wawa Welcome America! Festivities, Which Include: ASAP/After School Activities Partnerships, Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence, Esperanza and the Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports

Wawa, PA. (May 16, 2019) – After receiving more than 100 submissions, The Wawa Foundation Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded to support Wawa’s charitable giving and philanthropic activities, is thrilled to announce the 2019 finalists for “**The Wawa Foundation Hero Award**.” The Wawa Foundation Hero Award is an honor given to a non-profit organization serving the greater Philadelphia area that assists others and builds stronger communities through preserving our independence, protecting our safety, and mentoring and inspiring our youth. **The four finalists are:**

- 1) [ASAP/After School Activities Partnerships](#)
- 2) [Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence](#)
- 3) [Esperanza](#)
- 4) [Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports](#)

Vote from May 16 – June 16 to Help Choose a Winner

The winner will be chosen by public vote on [The Wawa Foundation’s website](#) from May 16 – June 16. The organization receiving the most votes will be presented to The Wawa Foundation Hero Award Panel for final approval.

The Wawa Foundation Hero Award and Wawa Welcome America!

Launched during Philadelphia’s *Wawa Welcome America!* festivities, The Wawa Foundation Hero Award will be presented as part of the Independence Day morning ceremony on July 4th in front of Independence Hall. The recipient of The Wawa Foundation Hero Award will receive a \$50,000 grant, and the three runners up will each receive \$10,000 grants.

“All of us at Wawa were truly inspired to hear about the work that so many area non-profits are doing to help others and improve their communities,” said The Wawa Foundation President, Jay Culotta. “We can’t wait to celebrate these four non-profits during the *Wawa Welcome America!* festivities as they tell their stories of what it means to be a hero. We invite all who applied to stay connected with The Wawa Foundation and find out more about the support The Wawa Foundation offers to non-profit organizations in Wawa’s operating areas.”

About the Finalists

ASAP/After School Activities Partnerships

Founded in 2002, ASAP is Philadelphia’s leading after-school partner and advocate. Through four citywide initiatives- ASAP Chess, ASAP Debate, ASAP Drama, and ASAP Scrabble- ASAP engages 5,000 kids annually in after-school programs that complement classroom learning and foster a sense of belonging among diverse groups of youth. ASAP’s work is made possible by caring adults – including teachers, community leaders, and volunteers who lend their time and talent after school to enrich the lives of young people and strengthen communities.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence

Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence (BBBSI) engages thousands of volunteers who give their precious time to mentor youth throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. Founded in 1915, BBBSI has positively impacted the lives of over 125,000 youth over the past century. The organization is best known for its evidence-based mentoring programs in which more than 3,100 youth per year are professionally supported and empowered to achieve their full potential. These programs are designed to create positive youth outcomes, including educational success, avoidance of risky behaviors, higher aspirations, greater confidence, and improved relationships. BBBSI additionally works with other mentoring organizations in the area, providing best practices training and technical assistance to ensure all youth have access to high quality mentors and high quality mentoring programs.

Esperanza

For more than 30 years, Esperanza has been empowering those on a pathway out of poverty in the Hunting Park section of North Philadelphia by offering programs that cultivate self-belief, grit, and knowledge acquisition, allowing clients to develop agency, voice, and influence over their own lives. Esperanza's programs help individuals at all stages of their lives to accumulate assets (economic, physical, and psychological) that together generate an effective toolkit of skills for successful advancement. The organization offers a diverse range of programs designed to prepare the next generation of community leaders, including secondary education, youth civic engagement, community STEM education, and arts education.

Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports

The Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports operates 13 sport-and-wellness programs year-round, with a focus on building inclusive communities for individuals with disabilities in a barrier-free and supportive setting. PCAS serves over 500 individuals with disabilities annually reaching, together with their families, over 2,000 people out of its Philadelphia facility. Participants include children, adults, seniors, and veterans and active duty military personnel with disabilities. Each year, athletes and volunteers dedicate countless hours to helping enable people with disabilities improve their health and wellness as well as activity levels.

About The Wawa Foundation Hero Award Submission Process

Non-profit organizations applied by submitting a video and/or a short story to The Wawa Foundation website that provided background on their organization's work with, and impact on, the community. The Wawa Foundation Grant Committee selected four compelling stories of organizations serving the Philadelphia community with the best fit to the award focus area and criteria. The four finalists will be put to a public vote, and the organization receiving the most votes will be presented to The Wawa Foundation Hero Award Panel for final approval and determination. The winning organization will receive a **\$50,000 grant** from The Wawa Foundation, and three runners-up will each receive **\$10,000 grants**.

For more information on The Wawa Foundation Hero Award and eligibility requirements, terms and conditions, please visit www.TheWawaFoundation.org. To be eligible to receive this award, non-profit organizations needed to meet the grant selection criteria of The Wawa Foundation for support of organizations providing assistance to causes representing everyday heroes.

About The Wawa Foundation

The Wawa Foundation is an extension of Wawa's commitment to fulfilling lives every day. The Wawa Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation founded to support Wawa, Inc.'s charitable giving and philanthropic activities – and ultimately to help build happier, stronger communities. The Wawa Foundation focuses its support on non-profit organizations committed to health, hunger and everyday heroes through local, regional and national grants. Since the inception of The Wawa Foundation in 2014, The Wawa Foundation and Wawa have contributed more than \$68 million to non-profit community organizations.

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