



**The Wawa Foundation Announces the Four Finalists for 2024 “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:
As I Plant This Seed, Leveling the Playing Field, Philadelphia Fire/EMS Explorer Career Youth Development
Program and Project 440*

Wawa, PA. (June 13, 2024) – After receiving more than 400 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 2024 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. [As I Plant This Seed](#)
2. [Leveling the Playing Field](#)
3. [Philadelphia Fire/EMS Explorer Career Youth Development Program](#)
4. [Project 440](#)

Vote from June 13 to June 28 to Help Choose a Winner

The winner will be chosen by public vote on [The Wawa Foundation’s website](#) from June 13 to June 28. 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.

“We are thrilled with the four finalists for The Wawa Foundation Hero Award and delighted to shine a light on the important work they’re doing in the community,” said Liz Simeone, President, The Wawa Foundation. “We look forward to celebrating their stories during the 4th of July Celebration of Freedom ceremony when we reveal the winner with a \$50,000 grant to help these organizations continue helping others in the community.”

About the Finalists

As I Plant This Seed

As I Plant This Seed promotes the positive development and advancement of urban youth through intergenerational access to education, information, and training in a safe space. Following completed enhancements to the space earlier in 2024, the organization continues to grow its 12-year history of giving local teens programs designed to help each kid reach their full potential. The organization’s vision is to provide the Hunting Park community, its youth and families with the resources and skills necessary to change their outlook on life and equip and empower them to ultimately decide their own outcomes.

Leveling the Playing Field – Philadelphia

Leveling the Playing Field (LFP) provides free sports equipment to schools, rec centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other youth programs in the Philadelphia area. In 2023, LFP distributed nearly \$1M in gear to 262 under-resourced schools and youth programs, enabling thousands of kids to learn, grow, and have fun through physical recreation. The new equipment has encouraged their active participation in various sports and has also provided them with an avenue for positive engagement and personal growth. LFP knows sports have a tremendous impact on kids mental and physical health, social-emotional development, school performance, and more. Entering their 3rd year of being a good teammate to our community, LFP equips our kids to play the sports they love.

Philadelphia Fire/EMS Explorer Career Youth Development Program

The PFD Fire/EMS Explorer program serves over 100 young adults from all socioeconomic backgrounds across the city who have experienced firsthand response efforts to various emergency response operations. Over 400 program alumni explorers have been enabled with general knowledge of emergency response operations, fire science/suppression, first aid and C.P.R., mass casualty, stop the bleed, and trauma response. The program's vision is to help bridge the communication gap of delivering public safety messages of prevention and preparedness. Explorers relate to the ever-changing environments challenging our communities, and become the agents capable of building stronger ones.

Project 440

Project 440 provides free after-school music-based programs for Philadelphia high school students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, gain proficiencies in leadership and service, and learn about opportunities for their next steps. Project 440 makes challenging and inspiring music programming accessible for youth to collaborate and be creative with each other as part of their efforts to serve our community and remove barriers to arts participation. Project 440 holds the perfect pitch for students who are just beginning to find their way.

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 the 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 must 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 \$160 million to non-profit community organizations.

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