



**The Wawa Foundation Announces the Four Finalists for 2025 “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:
Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation, Heights Philadelphia, Joyful Readers, and Veterans Multi-Service Center*

Wawa, PA. (June 13, 2025) – After receiving more than 300 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 2025 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. [Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation](#)
2. [Heights Philadelphia](#)
3. [Joyful Readers](#)
4. [Veterans Multi-Service Center](#)

Vote from June 13 to June 27 to Help Choose a Winner

The winner will be chosen by public vote on [The Wawa Foundation's website](#) from June 13 to June 27. 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

Heights Philadelphia

Our vision is to make Heights the place where young people find support to reach their full potential. And it's where we want to see the Philadelphia of the future. Because when all students graduate high school and achieve economic mobility, this community thrives."

Veterans Multi Service Center

Veterans Multi-Service Center (VMC) exists solely to “serve those who served” this great nation, our Veterans. Our mission is to provide services, programs, opportunity and advancement to Veterans of the U.S. military and their families.

Joyful Readers

Joyful Readers is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit whose mission is to ensure that students across the city gain the reading skills they need to thrive. Joyful Readers addresses this proficiency gap by placing full-time, trained tutors directly into Philadelphia public schools to provide daily, intensive reading tutoring to students in grades K-3.

Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation

Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation's Police Youth Alliance (PYA) builds trust-based relationships between police officers and students in underserved communities across Philadelphia, surrounding suburbs, and counties through New Jersey down to the shore. Through in-school and after-school programs, PYA partners with schools, officers, and community groups to break down barriers and foster mutual respect. Programs include STEM and reading enrichment, recreational activities like chess and e-gaming, and community events such as basketball clinics and clean-ups. All of these create shared experiences that promote understanding, collaboration, and lasting connection with the youth community and police officers.

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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