



The Wawa Foundation Announces SPIN *Special People in Northeast* as the First-Ever Winner of The Wawa Foundation "Hero Award"

SPIN, Veterans Multi-Service Center Philadelphia, Beat the Streets Wrestling Program of Philadelphia, and Philadelphia READS all Recognized during Wawa Welcome America Independence Day Celebration: SPIN awarded a \$50,000 grant from The Wawa Foundation and the three runners up will each receive \$10,000 grants

Wawa, PA. (July 4, 2016) – After more than 11,500 votes were cast from people around the region, The Wawa Foundation, Wawa's non-profit through which its charitable giving is channeled, is thrilled to announce that **SPIN Special People in Northeast is the winner of The Wawa Foundation's first-ever "Hero Award,"** an honor given to non-profit organizations serving the greater Philadelphia area to recognize their outstanding commitment to assist others and helping to advance communities through preserving our freedom, protecting our safety, inspiring learning, and encouraging and empowering others to become better citizens and community members.

The Wawa Foundation Hero Award was launched during Philadelphia's *Wawa Welcome America!* festivities and was presented in front of thousands of people as part of the Independence Day morning ceremony on July 4th in front of Independence Hall. During the event, Wawa's President and CEO, Chris Gheysens, presented the awards on the stage, speaking about the significance of each nonprofit and their heroic efforts to better the lives of so many people throughout Philadelphia. [SPIN](#) was selected as the Hero Award Gold Medal winner after receiving the highest number of public votes over a 10-day period on The Wawa Foundation website among four non-profit finalists, including [Veterans Multi-Service Center Philadelphia](#), [Beat the Streets](#) and [Philadelphia Reads](#). The four finalists were chosen among more than 300 submissions from Philadelphia-area non-profits for having the most compelling stories of assisting others and advancing their communities. As the winner of the Hero Award Gold Medal, **SPIN will receive a \$50,000 grant from The Wawa Foundation and the three runners up will each receive Silver Hero Medals and \$10,000 grants.**

About the Winner

SPIN

Special People in Northeast (SPIN) was founded in 1970 by a group of families who wanted their children to have a summer camp experience that would not only meet their specific needs, but would allow these children the recreational activity they would have otherwise missed. Forty six years later, SPIN is dedicated to the mission of providing the highest quality people-first services and support for children and adults with intellectual, developmental, and autism spectrum disabilities so that each may achieve and enjoy a life of possibilities. Today, the organization supports more than 3,500 infants, children, and adults in the Philadelphia area. Find out more at <http://spininc.org/>.

About the Runners Up

Veterans Multi-Service Center Philadelphia

Since 1980, Veterans Multi-Service Center (VMC) Philadelphia has served those in the area who help preserve our freedom and each year helps more than 3,500 local veterans through their transition back to civilian life. As the only non-profit agency in the Philadelphia and surrounding areas that provides a comprehensive resource center available to all veterans in need, VMC offers meals six days a week as well as services like job training and placement, benefits analysis, ongoing case management, Women Veteran programming, and a multitude of other resources to educate, inspire, and empower Veterans during their transition. Find out more at <http://www.vmcenter.org/>.

Beat the Streets Wrestling Program of Philadelphia

The Beat the Streets Wrestling Program of Philadelphia is committed to helping establish youth wrestling programs in the Philadelphia metropolitan region. The organization works to foster the holistic development of student-athletes by providing the resources to support an athletic program and an academic tutoring program across a group of local schools and community programs. Beat the Streets runs programs in 22 Philadelphia-area locations, primarily in extremely under-resourced neighborhoods, and serves over 1,200 students with between 100 and 400 hours of programming on an annual basis. Find out more at <http://btsphilly.org/>.

Philadelphia READS

The mission of Philadelphia READS is to "raise a city of readers" through quality out-of-school-time programs focused on helping children read on or above grade level by grade 4. A proud partner of the "READ! By 4" campaign, the organization relies heavily on volunteers to serve the Philadelphia community. Philadelphia READS helps hundreds of students in the city receive one-on-one literacy tutoring and mentoring every week, and since its inception has distributed more than 100,000 new or nearly new books to hundreds of teachers each year for use in high-need schools. Find out more at <http://www.philareads.org/>.

About The Wawa Foundation "Hero Award" Submission Process

More than 300 non-profit organizations applied for The Wawa Foundation "Hero Award" by submitting, through The Wawa Foundation website, a video and/or a short story with background on the organization's work with, and impact on, the community. The Wawa Foundation Hero Award Panel (the "Panel") selected the four most compelling stories. The four finalists were put to a public vote, and after receiving the most votes, SPIN was presented to the Panel for final approval and determination.

For more information on The Wawa Foundation Hero Award, 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.

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