



## **The Wawa Foundation Announces the Four Finalists for The Wawa Foundation “Hero Award”: Calls for Public Vote to Determine Hero Award Recipient**

*Four Greater Philadelphia Area Non-Profits Will Be Celebrated During **Wawa Welcome America! Festivities**, Which Include: Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia, EducationWorks, Inn Dwelling, Philadelphia Fire Department Explorers*

**Wawa, PA. (May 21, 2018)** – After receiving more than 250 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 finalists for its 2018 “Hero Award,” an honor that will be 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) [Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia](#)
- 2) [EducationWorks](#)
- 3) [Inn Dwelling](#)
- 4) [Philadelphia Fire Department Explorers](#)

### **Vote from May 22 – June 15 to Help Choose a Winner**

The winner will be chosen by public vote on [The Wawa Foundation’s website](#) from May 22 – June 15. The organization receiving the most votes will be presented to The Wawa Foundation Hero Award Panel for final approval.

### **The 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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, Jared 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 to find out more about the support The Wawa Foundation offers to non-profit organizations in Wawa’s operating area.”

### **About the Finalists**

#### **Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia**

Heroes work every day to make the world around them a more positive place. At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia (BGCP), our Heroes include the staff, volunteers and donors who help create a brighter future for Philadelphia. BGCP is a non-profit organization that provides a safe place for Philadelphia youth to learn and grow. Its mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need it the most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. The organization does this by fostering ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals and offering life-enhancing programs and character development experiences. Today, BGCP serves over 8,900 children, making it one of the largest youth-development organizations in the city. Through

programs such as STEM Learning Labs, Literacy Initiative and My.Future technology centers, BGCP teaches today's youth the skills they need to be successful in the 21st century economy. Beyond financial and professional success, the organization also instills leadership values and the importance of giving back, so that tomorrow's youth will always have a Boys & Girls Club to turn to when they need a Hero.

### **EducationWorks**

At EducationWorks, students are thought of as a team of not just heroes, but superheroes with extraordinary strengths and abilities. And for our organization, it means that those who we serve are empowered to provide and seek "Opportunities for Learning and Skills for Life." EducationWorks' programming engages youth by providing high quality educational programs that make the school day whole and reengage disconnected young adults through education and career readiness programs throughout Philadelphia and Camden. By focusing on topics like literacy, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM), social-emotional and experiential learning, on-the-job training, and career exploration, we are equipping approximately 12,000 young individuals annually with the tools needed to be successful in school and life. Our programming exposes young people to new experiences and gives them a chance to learn what they like and what they don't, and more importantly, the ability to dream big, to seek opportunities outside of their day-to-day experiences, and to fail without fear. As a result, these youth are confident, empowered, and a superhero at school, at home, and in the community.

### **Inn Dwelling**

They say it takes a village. Well, at Inn Dwelling, our village is one made of heroes—the many staff, volunteer tutors, collaborators, and network of supporters who believe in our kids as much as we do and make opportunity available to turn dreams into reality. Founded in 1981, Inn Dwelling has consistently worked to enable our community members to achieve self-sufficiency and upward mobility. Today, we serve gifted, underprivileged, at-risk Philadelphia youth ages 11 to 18 through our Comprehensive Youth Initiative (CYI), a unique transformative education program that weaves together after-school tutoring, standardized test prep, STREAM skills, community service, leadership development, scholarships, and more with mentoring and advocacy to give our students the best chance at success. We aim to break the cycle of poverty by providing our next generation with the right tools to inspire, thrive, and lead. Our program equips and empowers youth in our city to become their own heroes, ready to effect change for themselves, their families, and their community.

### **Philadelphia Fire Department Explorer Youth Program**

The Philadelphia Fire Department Explorers inspire communities and their peers to become engaged in pursuit of public safety and disaster preparedness. The Fire Explorers is a program for teens and young adults interested in fire science, emergency medical services (EMS), disaster relief, emergency management, and military-related training. They help emergency response organizations be more adaptive in providing service to ever-changing communities regarding growing populations, language barriers, economic transition, and/or cultural transformation. Working side-by-side with the Philadelphia Fire Department, the Explorers are trained to work in diverse communities providing fire, life safety, and emergency preparedness education in various formats, such as door-to-door smoke alarm installations and home safety surveys, community events, and school career days. Through a mix of mentoring, classroom instruction, and hands-on training, the program also helps to build character, leadership, responsibility, and personal fitness in enrollees by performing many of the duties professional firefighters do on a daily basis.

### **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](http://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 by Wawa, Inc. to support the company's charitable giving and philanthropic activities – and ultimately to help build happier, stronger communities. The Wawa Foundation focuses its support on organizations committed to health, hunger and everyday heroes through local, regional and national grants. Since its inception in 2014, The Wawa Foundation and Wawa have contributed more than \$50 million to non-profit community organizations.*

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