



The Wawa Foundation Announces the Four Finalists for 2021 “The Wawa Foundation Hero Award” and Calls for Public Vote to Determine Top Grant Recipient

Four Non-Profits Serving Philadelphia Will Be Celebrated During Wawa Welcome America, Which Include: ABC Men, Inc., The Garces Foundation, Police Athletic League of Philadelphia and The Veterans Group

Wawa, PA. (June 10, 2021) – 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 2021 finalists for “**The Wawa Foundation Hero Award.**” The Wawa Foundation Hero Award is an honor given to a non-profit organization and its volunteers serving Philadelphia by providing services that build stronger communities through preserving our independence, protecting our safety and mentoring and inspiring our youth.

The four finalists are:

- 1) [ABC Men, Inc.](#)
- 2) [The Garces Foundation](#)
- 3) [Police Athletic League of Philadelphia](#)
- 4) [The Veterans Group](#)

Vote from June 10 – June 29 to Help Choose a Winner

The winner will be chosen by public vote on [The Wawa Foundation’s website](#) from June 10 – June 29. 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 Celebration of Freedom Ceremony on July 4th. 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

ABC Men, Inc.

ABC Men, Inc. is committed to serving the community by lending a helping hand to seniors, those with disabilities, and youth in need, regardless of race, nationality, religion, or creed. Since 2011, it has supported disadvantaged and under-served populations through a variety of programming, including free snow removal, Winter Coats & Canned Goods Giveaway, Adopt-A-Family Holiday Drive, free fans and heaters, transportation to medical appointments, food distribution and home delivery of Senior Food Boxes, (totaling more than 75,000 lbs. in the past year), as well as companionship. They maintain partnerships with local organizations caring for the elderly and disabled and provide youth programming ranging from mentorship, school supplies and college visits. By responding to the needs of its community, ABC Men continues to pursue its vision to inspire an atmosphere of service through deeds, not words.

The Garces Foundation

The Garces Foundation is committed to helping South Philadelphia's underserved immigrant community get access to healthcare and educational services. With a focus on Spanish-speaking immigrants in Philadelphia, their programs have a direct impact on the health, language skills, and career paths of those they serve. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they established a food pantry to serve the residents of Philadelphia neighborhoods, especially low-income immigrants affected by the economic disruptions, and have provided over 13,000 boxes of food to those in need. Their volunteers, which include numerous doctors and dentists, have given their valuable time at no cost to serve the community and improve their access to health care.

Philadelphia Police Athletic League

The Police Athletic League is "Cops Helping Kids," and PAL is committed to serving youth, reducing crime, promoting character development, and improving educational outcomes. Philadelphia Police Officers, supported by civilians, offer sports and other programs to youth in PAL Centers in some of the city's highest crime and lowest income neighborhoods. PAL Centers are safe havens, offering a variety of programs and other events to attract, engage, and develop an active membership base of more than 10,000 Philadelphia youth. During the pandemic, PAL adjusted operations to serve cohorts of youth for optimal health and safety conditions. Especially with online schooling, an increase in violent crime, and the ongoing effects of the virus hitting these communities hardest, youth needed an in-person outlet in the after-school hours in the safety of PAL's Centers.

The Veterans Group

The Veterans Group is a homeless facility serving Veterans in the Philadelphia area and especially those whose service resulted in mental health and physical health issues. Established in 2007, the organization is located in the Powelton Village section of West Philadelphia, near the VA Medical Center. The Veterans Group offers lodging, 3 nutritional meals each day, services and assistance with finding a job, and free assistance with obtaining DL214 discharge, which is mandatory to gaining medical benefits. This vulnerable homeless population is a product of combat related injury, PTSD, and associated mental health illness. The goal of The Veterans Group is for our Veterans to live in peace as productive members of civilian society, and the organization accomplishes this mission by developing individualized plans for each resident while providing a family-like community of support and care.

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 Inc.

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, Inc. have contributed more than \$100 million to non-profit community organizations.

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