

# Newsworthy

NEWS, TRENDS, TIPS, AND OTHER COOL STUFF

## PSATS Youth Awards Contest



BY BRENDA WILT / ASSISTANT EDITOR

Four groups have won recognition in PSATS' 2020-21 Youth Awards Contest, established to honor the valuable contributions young people make to their communities. Each winning group receives a \$500 cash prize and a framed certificate.

PSATS created the awards in 1978 to honor the youth-oriented programs that improve the quality of life in townships and encourage youth involvement in local government. The Association will mail flyers about the 2022 contest this month to member townships, county associations, Boy and Girl Scout councils, Future Farmers of America, and 4-H Clubs through the Penn State Extension Office. The contest **deadline is March 1, 2022.**

For more information about the Youth Awards, call Brenda Wilt at PSATS at (717) 763-0930, ext. 123, or email [bwilt@psats.org](mailto:bwilt@psats.org). Townships may also go to [www.psats.org](http://www.psats.org), choose the Programs & Services tab, and click on PSATS Award Programs in the drop-down menu.

Highlights of the winning projects follow. ♦

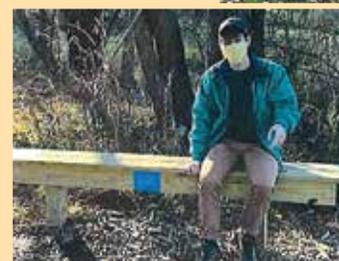
### Boy Scout Troop 95, Chester County

In this group's winning project, Eagle Scout candidate Andrew LaGreca undertook a project to install nine benches on a disc golf course at a North Coventry Township park. LaGreca worked with the township's parks and recreation committee to come up with a design for the benches and determine the ideal location for them at each "hole."

LaGreca coordinated tasks to be completed by troop members, including:

- soliciting donations from individuals and businesses;
- marking locations for the benches and clearing brush from the sites;
- working with adult volunteers to cut lumber and partially assemble the benches off-site;
- digging two holes at each bench site and then assembling and cementing the benches in place; and
- spreading township-supplied wood chips under each bench and attaching sponsor signage.

"This is one of the township's most heavily used parks," LaGreca stated in the contest submission. "Besides the large number of groups that use the disc golf course, many people walk the open area of the course. These benches will also encourage people with health issues to participate in outdoor activities."



# PSATS Youth Awards presented at Annual Business Meeting

Two of the 2021 Youth Award winners were able to travel to Hershey in October to accept their awards at PSATS' Annual Business Meeting. PSATS will present awards to the other two winning groups in the coming weeks as scheduling permits.



**ABOVE:** Members of the Brownsville Area High School Students in Action from Fayette County accept a PSATS Youth Award from PSATS Executive Board member Kathy Rader, far right. From left are sponsors Kellie DePietro and Rebecca Harvey and students Kylie Bodnovich, Ryan Dubos, and Alaina Johnson.

**LEFT:** Eagle Scout Andrew LaGreca of Boy Scout Troop 95 in Chester County accepts a PSATS Youth Award from Executive Board member Kathy Rader.

## Brownsville Area High School Students in Action, Fayette County

After researching the causes of low morale in their school and larger community, these students learned that low academic achievement and lack of social opportunities for teens contributed to the negative environment in the community. To help address these issues, the group consulted with the local library's board of directors to develop an expansion plan for the facility targeted at creating space and programs for teens.

A visit to teen spaces at other libraries inspired the group to design the new space with furniture and equipment that can be reconfigured for use by other groups. The teen room includes a computer lab, lounge area, maker space, collaboration area, reading nook, and ADA-accessible restrooms and is outfitted with computers, projectors, a television and gaming system, board games, sewing machines, musical

instruments, and typewriters.

The students worked with the design engineer and raised more than \$300,000 through grant writing, fundraising, and community donations. The teens managed social media pages about the project, managed a budget, and organized a groundbreaking ceremony.

"As an educational leader, I am overwhelmed by this group of teenagers and their desire to assist in the revitalization of their [community]," Brownsville Area School District Superintendent Keith Hartbauer wrote in support of the group's contest entry. "Their passion, drive, and commitment to something greater than themselves give us all hope."



Turn page for more winners ➤

# NEWSWORTHY

## Girl Scout Troop 52954, Erie County

This Girl Scout troop's project tapped into the popularity of Little Free Food Pantries, which place small receptacles stocked with non-perishable food items and other basic necessities in public locations for anyone to access. The troop took on the decoration and maintenance of one such pantry at a local elementary school.

The scouts painted the pantry based on the theme "Helping Hands" and began gathering items to stock it, including canned goods, masks, and other non-food items. The troop also has plans to build and maintain a second pantry in a low-income neighborhood.

Eager to continue their community service, the scouts held a drive-through food and clothing collection. Over four hours, the troop collected food, coats, hats, shoes, and more that they passed along to a local

shelter and a food pantry.

Next, the troop assembled "caring bags" of personal care items, gloves, and hats for needy families, and baked brownies and cookies for a local soup kitchen.

"Our troop has an overwhelming desire to serve our community," the troop's submission said. "The girls are already working on the plans for more acts of service over the coming months and years. True acts of service, through kindness and love, spill from these girls' hearts."



Entry info for 2022 Youth Awards coming this month!

## Boy Scout Troop 712, Lawrence County

When Eagle Scout candidate Sam Kuhn learned that a footbridge in Wilmington Township's Marti Park needed to be renovated to give visitors access to the upper end of a local trail, he decided to undertake the project. He directed his troop members in the replacement of the deteriorating handrails and decking.

Kuhn met with township officials to seek approval for the project and then worked to locate materials, set up a work schedule, and invite the other scouts to help. The project involved plasma cutting (with the help of an experienced adult), grinding, and welding to create the metal handrails; cutting and installing deck planks; painting; and attaching the new handrails.

"Marti Park is utilized by a number of people from numerous areas in the county," Kuhn wrote in the contest submission. "This is one of the few good walking paths that is accessible to residents. Without the bridges, the whole trail would be inaccessible. With the repair of the bridge, residents of Wilmington Township and the local area could continue to use the walking trail safely."

