



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Michael Lazorchak**

AGP & Associates, Inc.

Phone: 989-839-5800

[m.lazorchak@agp-inc.com](mailto:m.lazorchak@agp-inc.com)

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR THIRD ANNUAL  
A.H. NICKLESS INNOVATION AWARD COMPETITION**

***Up to \$77,500 in prizes to be awarded to top three local teams and their schools***

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Sept. 1, 2015** – After awarding nearly \$147,000 in scholarships and technology grants to local students and schools in its first two years, the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award is now accepting registrations for the 2015-2016 academic year competition.

The award, presented by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation, is an annual competition for high school students ages 13 to 18 in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties. Its goal is to inspire passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and challenge students to work in teams to think innovatively and develop solutions to problems impacting the world in areas such as alternative energy, health care, science, technology and life sciences.

Registration for the first phase of the competition began Sept. 1 and ends Oct. 30. Teams can find more information about the competition, read the rules and regulations, and register online at [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com).

During phase one, each team is required to submit a two-page description of its proposed project. In November, regional experts will choose 20 projects to continue in the competition; each of those teams will be granted \$1,000 to develop their projects during phase two, which lasts until March 31, 2016. On April 9, 2016, teams will present their projects during a daylong event at Saginaw Valley State University.

Members of the three winning teams will receive scholarships, and each of those teams' schools will win a STEM education grant. Available prizes total \$77,500 annually and are awarded as follows:

- **First place** receives up to five **\$5,000 scholarships** for students and a **\$20,000 STEM education grant** for the school
- **Second place** receives up to five **\$2,500 scholarships** for students and a **\$10,000 STEM education grant** for the school
- **Third place** receives up to five **\$1,000 scholarships** for students and a **\$5,000 STEM education grant** for the school



The competition provides more than just monetary incentives; it gives students valuable hands-on experience that is critical in today's STEM-focused careers.

“This competition is not just about math and science, but the big picture – including finance, marketing and especially creativity,” said Judy Graham, who, with her sisters, Joanie Tankersley and Janet Royce, created the award in memory of their father, Arthur H. Nickless. “Although we want to focus on the importance of STEM skills, we are looking for teams that have members with all kinds of strengths. We want this competition to help students prepare for the world that’s waiting for them. And that means learning how to be flexible and adapt to evolving problems.”

For the 2014-2015 competition, the winning teams and their projects were:

- **First place:** From **Herbert Henry Dow High School in Midland**, Team Leader Varun Shanker and team members Kelly DeRees, Matthew Flanagan, Benjamin Morgan and Austen Zhu, coached by Dirk DeBoer, developed a piezoelectric prototype producing alternating current to harness energy from movement.
- **Second place:** From **Midland High School**, Team Leader Lauren Maschino and team members Andrew Kim and Natalie Knapp, coached by Robert Fox, presented SmartPill, a mobile application designed to reduce prescription drug nonadherence (patients not taking prescription drugs as directed).
- **Third place:** From **Midland High School**, Team Leader Ian Murray and team members Ethan Brown, Kyle Franson and Jacob Striebel, also coached by Fox, presented the Braille Sign Generator, which provides a cost-effective method for the production of signage featuring Braille text and large-print, high-contrast English letters.

### **About the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award**

---

The A.H. Nickless Innovation Award was created by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation to honor the memory of the late Arthur H. Nickless, a local innovator and owner of Wolverine Telephone Company. With a goal of inspiring passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the competition is open to high school students in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties and awards up to \$77,500 per year in scholarships to students and STEM grants to schools. For more information, visit [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com) or [facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward](https://facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward).