



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Alisha Toyzan**

AGP & Associates, Inc.

Phone: 989-839-5800

[alisha.toyzan@agp-inc.com](mailto:alisha.toyzan@agp-inc.com)

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **Registration now open for 11th annual A.H. Nickless Innovation Award competition**

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

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Sept. 6, 2023** – After awarding \$644,000 in scholarships and grants to local students and schools in its first 10 years, the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award is now accepting registrations for the 2023-24 academic year competition.

Aimed at inspiring passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and challenging students to work in teams to think innovatively and develop solutions to problems impacting the world, the award is an annual competition for high school students ages 13 to 18 in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties. Topics typically include – but are not limited to – issues related to alternative energy, healthcare, science, technology or life sciences.

Registration for Phase One of the competition began Sept. 1 and ends at 4 p.m. EDT Oct. 27. Prospective participants can find more information about the competition, read the rules and regulations, and register at [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com).

During Phase One, each team is required to identify a problem and submit a two-page description of its proposed project. By late November, a panel of regional experts will choose up to 20 teams to continue in the competition; each of those teams will be granted \$1,000 with which to conduct its research and develop a viable solution during Phase Two, which lasts until the March 29, 2024, project submission deadline. On Saturday, April 20, 2024, the teams will present their projects during a daylong public event at Saginaw Valley State University.

Members of the three winning teams will receive scholarships, and each of those teams' schools will receive 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 student team members and a **\$20,000 STEM education grant** for the school.
- **Second place** receives up to five **\$2,500 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$10,000 STEM education grant** for the school.



- **Third place** receives up to five **\$1,000 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$5,000 STEM education grant** for the school.

### 2022-23 competition recap

For 2022-23, [the winning teams, which earned a combined total of \\$61,500 in scholarships for the student team members and STEM education grants for their schools](#), were:

- **First place: Wet Cell Power, Nouvel Catholic Central High School, Saginaw:** Team Leader Andrew Wagner and teammate Colin Kaul, coached by Clara Wagner, created an oxyhydrogen gas cell system designed to power the internal combustion engine of a boat.
- **Second place: Auesome Reality, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy:** Team Leader Ricardo Pastor and team members Akhilesh Kanmanthreddy, Alexandre Morrison, Saiyan Tabrej and Mohammad Tuma, coached by David Allan, Ph.D., created a virtual reality game/simulation to help children with autism develop social and communication skills.
- **Third place: Dow SAGA, Herbert Henry Dow High School, Midland:** Team Leader Amy Lee and team members Shubhan Nagarkar, Grant Wang and Andy Yao, coached by Diane White, explored noninvasive, cost-efficient, accurate glucose-monitoring options.

Other schools represented in [the top 18 teams](#) for 2022-23 were Bullock Creek High School (Bullock Creek School District in Midland), Freeland High School (Freeland Community School District) and Midland High School (Midland Public Schools).

### Fostering student innovation for more than a decade

The 2023-24 competition marks the 11th year of the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award. Since the first competition in 2013-14, more than \$640,000 has been awarded to participants and their schools, including \$329,000 in student scholarships and \$315,000 in STEM education grants, respectively. In all, nearly 500 students have developed and presented a total of more than 150 team projects in Phase Two of the competition. While there was not a competition in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation distributed \$16,500 in scholarships to 11 past participants who were unable to compete during their senior year due to the cancellation.

### 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. A total of more than \$640,000 has been awarded since the first competition in 2013-14. For more information, visit [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com).