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**Local students, schools win \$61,500 in scholarships, STEM grants in 10th annual A.H. Nickless Innovation Award competition**  
***10-year total of scholarships, grants awarded reaches \$644,000***

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., April 17, 2023** – Over the weekend, 18 teams of students representing six local schools presented the output of months of research and development in an annual competition that promotes innovation and creative thinking among high school students in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Following the finale event for the 10th annual [A.H. Nickless Innovation Award](#) competition – which took place April 15 at Saginaw Valley State University’s Alan W. Ott Auditorium – three teams of students went home with a total of \$26,500 in scholarships for themselves and another \$35,000 in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education grants for their schools. Each winning team also will receive a customized plaque.

Winning teams were:

- **First place:** Wet Cell Power, Nouvel Catholic Central High School (Catholic Diocese of Saginaw)  
**Prizes:** \$5,000 scholarship per student team member and a \$20,000 STEM education grant for the school
- **Second place:** Auesome Reality, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy (Saginaw Public School District)  
**Prizes:** \$2,500 scholarship per student team member and a \$10,000 STEM education grant for the school
- **Third place:** Dow SAGA, Herbert Henry Dow High School (Midland Public Schools)  
**Prizes:** \$1,000 scholarship per student team member and a \$5,000 STEM education grant for the school

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

Additional information regarding the top three teams and their projects follows.



### **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.

“As vehicles move away from fossil fuels, there is a need to reexamine new fuel alternatives that are renewable, sustainable and environmentally friendly,” the team members wrote in their final project report. “In the United States, there are more than 11 million registered boats that sail through the water, including the Great Lakes. The project works by using water to generate hydrogen and oxygen to power a boat’s engine, which can provide a fuel alternative to this challenge.”

In addition to the scholarships, grant and plaque, the first-place team members took home a 3D-printed traveling trophy to showcase at their school for the next year. Their names will be engraved on the trophy permanently.

### **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.

Presented by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation, the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award 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 STEM subjects and challenge students to work in teams to think innovatively and develop solutions to problems impacting the world. Topics typically include – but are not limited to – issues related to alternative energy, healthcare, science, technology or life sciences.

### **Celebrating 10 years of student innovation**

The 2022-23 competition marked the 10th year of the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award. Since the first competition in 2013-14, more than \$640,000 has now 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.



Registration for the 11th annual competition, which will span the 2023-24 academic year, begins Sept. 1 on the Register page at [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com).

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

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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).