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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**Nouvel Catholic Central HS, Midland HS and John Glenn HS teams win \$57,000 in scholarships and STEM grants in A.H. Nickless Innovation Award**

***11-year total of scholarships and grants awarded through annual competition surpasses \$700K***

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., April 22, 2024** – Over the weekend, 17 teams of students representing eight 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 11th annual [A.H. Nickless Innovation Award](#) competition on April 20 at Saginaw Valley State University's Alan W. Ott Auditorium, three teams of students went home with a combined total of \$22,000 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:** Find My Firefighter from Nouvel Catholic Central High School in Saginaw (Catholic Diocese of Saginaw)  
**Prizes:** \$5,000 scholarship per student team member and a \$20,000 STEM education grant for the school
- **Second place:** CyberAI from Midland High School (Midland Public Schools)  
**Prizes:** \$2,500 scholarship per student team member and a \$10,000 STEM education grant for the school
- **Third place:** The STEMatric Duo from John Glenn High School in Bay City (Bangor Township Schools)  
**Prizes:** \$1,000 scholarship per student team member and a \$5,000 STEM education grant for the school

Other schools represented at the event included Bullock Creek High School, Midland (Bullock Creek School District); Herbert Henry Dow High School, Midland (Midland Public Schools); Frankenmuth High School (Frankenmuth School District); Freeland High School (Freeland Community School District); and Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy (Saginaw Public School District).



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

**First place: Find My Firefighter, Nouvel Catholic Central High School, Saginaw**

Team Leader Riley Mattheis and teammate Sydney Leslie, coached by teacher Clara Wagner, created a GPS tracking device that gives precise location of a firefighter so they can be found faster to reduce serious injuries.

“Firefighters and first responders are often in life-threatening situations to save others from disaster,” the team members wrote in their final project report, describing the impetus for their project. “They can become trapped in rubble, debris, lost in a desolate area, disoriented and therefore go missing with no way to be located, resulting in death.”

In addition to receiving the scholarships, grant and plaque, the first-place team also will get to display the competition’s 3D-printed traveling trophy at their school for the next year. The team members’ names will be engraved on the trophy permanently.

**Second place: CyberAI, Midland High School**

Team Leader Jacob Rudisel and team members Isla McCubbin-Green, Rori McCubbin-Green and Grace Riddle, coached by teacher Robert Fox, created real-time call-monitoring software with artificial intelligence to protect users from scam callers.

**Third place: The STEMatic Duo, John Glenn High School, Bay City**

Team Leader Emma Dabrowski and teammate Madalyn Hughes, coached by teacher Shawn Maison, created a clothing kit to ease the chemotherapy process for pediatric cancer patients, including a sweatshirt-blanket, an eye mask and non-slip socks.

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.

**Fostering student innovation for more than a decade**

The 2023-24 competition marked the 11th year of the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award. Since the first competition in 2013-14, \$701,000 has been awarded to participants and their schools, including \$351,000 in student scholarships and \$350,000 in STEM education grants, respectively. In all, more than 500 students have developed and presented a total of more than 170 team projects in Phase Two of the competition during the competition’s first 10 years. 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 12th annual competition, which will span the 2024-25 academic year, begins Sept. 4 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 \$700,000 has been awarded since the first competition in 2013-14. For more information, visit [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com).