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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**Local students, schools win \$70K in scholarships, STEM grants in seventh annual A.H. Nickless Innovation Award competition**

***Seven-year total of prizes surpasses \$500K***

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., June 16, 2020** – Following a postponement due to the COVID-19 pandemic – and the subsequent adoption of a remote competition format to promote social distancing and participant safety – the [A.H. Nickless Innovation Award](#) competition recently crowned its 2019-20 winners, resulting in \$70,000 in scholarships and grants being awarded to local students and their schools.

A total of 12 teams of students representing five local schools presented months of research via Zoom meetings on June 13, unconventionally finishing out the seventh annual competition after an approximately two-month delay. The competition – presented by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation – promotes innovation and creative thinking among high school students in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Project topics for the competition typically include – but are not limited to – issues related to alternative energy, healthcare, science, technology or life sciences.

Following remote presentations of the 12 projects for the competition’s judges, three teams of students won a total of \$35,000 in scholarships for themselves and another \$35,000 in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) grants for their sponsoring schools. Each winning team also will receive a custom plaque.

Winning teams were:

- **First place:** CD-ROM, Midland High School  
**Prizes:** \$5,000 scholarship per team member and a \$20,000 STEM grant for the school
- **Second place:** Foresight, Freeland High School  
**Prizes:** \$2,500 scholarship per team member and a \$10,000 STEM grant for the school
- **Third place:** SunSafe, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy  
**Prizes:** \$1,000 scholarship per team member and a \$5,000 STEM grant for the school



Other schools represented in the final 12 teams were Herbert Henry Dow High School (Midland) and Reese High School.

Additional information regarding the top three 2019-20 teams and their projects follows.

**First place: CD-ROM, Midland High School**

Team Leader Corbin Fleming-Dittenber and team members Andrew Scheffer, Timmy Kipfmiller and Erika Leasher, coached by Robert Fox; the team’s project was a meal-planning app to help low-income households save money and reduce food waste.

“While there are many meal-planning apps available, none of them are very useful for low-income families. These families need low-cost, nutritious ingredients that minimize food waste and are easy to prepare,” the team members wrote in their project abstract. “Existing apps target special diets, focus on fine dining and do not consider the restricted. Our app will address the problem of food waste and saving money for low-income families.”

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

**Second place: Foresight, Freeland High School**

Team Leader Liam Pan and team members Hana Pan, Britnee Niedzielski and Ashley Harvey, coached by Thomas Short; the team’s project was a vision-enhancing electronic device for individuals with low vision.

**Third place: SunSafe, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy**

Team Leader Bhanu Mamillapalli and team members Pratham Patel, Malhar Amin, Shiloh Maliskey and Brendan Fosgitt, coached by Matthew Miller; the team’s project was a skin cancer prevention device that alerts users about dangerous UV exposure levels.

**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. For more information, visit [ahinnovationaward.com](http://ahinnovationaward.com) or [facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward](https://facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward).