



25th Annual Spellman Humanitarian Awards

April 12, 2023

Spellman Education Center

West Chester Area Education Association and West Chester Area School District

**proudly present the
2023 Spellman Humanitarian Award Recipients**

EAST

Patricia Agustin
Saanvi Bhatia
Daniel Cheng
Anna Harootunian
Erica Martin
Malavika Menon
Norah Plummer
Grace Rudderow
Patrick Tran
Jada Yard

HENDERSON

Emily Brockson
Jenaea Davenport
Caleb Fernandes
Nishita Jakkam
Maximilian Moak
Anjana Pramod
Meet Shah
Simeon Shappell-Smith
Aryan Sharma
Christopher Simms

RUSTIN

Corinne Atwell
Nora Jiang
Sehaj Kaur
Connor Orkin
Nicholas Piccone
Bobby Ristine
Gavin Snyder
Hudson Sunderlin
Spencer Upton
Gayatri Venkatesan

Congratulations students!

**We are very proud of you. We give thanks and praise to the
parents of these students. You are their first and best teachers
and have done an outstanding job parenting these fine students.**

PROGRAM

Greetings and Introduction

Mr. Chris Reyna

West Chester Area Education Association

Welcome

Dr. Kalia Reynolds

Substitute Superintendent, West Chester Area School District

Remarks

Mrs. Sue Tiernan

President, West Chester Area School District School Board

Presentation of Awards

Mr. Chris Reyna

West Chester Area Education Association

Closing Remarks

Mr. Chris Reyna

West Chester Area Education Association

Special thanks to our talented student musicians from

Rustin High School for their music!

Alex Welter, Áine Harner, Luke Benfer, and Jace Salera

East High School

Patricia Agustin



While volunteering as a coach with the Girls on the Run program at her former elementary school, Patty and her group of elementary runners practiced in the freezing rain, worked on building stamina for a 5K, and developed a close relationship with each other. At practices, Patty taught the girls about “self-esteem, bullying, and media.” Patty has also worked with GirlUp all through high school. Her favorite project was organizing a prom dress shop where

girls could take prom dresses home for free. Through coaching and helping others, Patty hopes to continue this legacy of empowerment.

Saanvi Bhatia



Saanvi began as a tutor at the Melton Center at age 14. In her first year there, she helped students with their homework and helped those who needed extra support in other socioemotional skills. She then got approval to start a Writers Workshop that emphasized collaboration and creativity, helping to build a community of writers. Saanvi also leads a Girls Leadership Club, while advocating at fundraising events and

has been an Academic Coach throughout her time at the Melton Center. Giving such a great amount of time and effort has made Saanvi aware of the needs in our community and the difference she can make by giving her time and effort.

Daniel Cheng



Staying true to his love for learning, Daniel volunteered to tutor for Young Men and Women in Charge, a local tutoring service. Daniel tutored middle and high school students in math and science. Daniel has done volunteer work in fields he loves, music and art. He has given his time during auditions for the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Music Institute as well as volunteering his time with the International Chinese Art Society of America. At East High School, Daniel has and is working tirelessly on the House of Hope Charity Concert which raised \$7,000 last year for the Home of the Sparrow, a non-profit helping homeless women and single mothers in need.

Anna Harootunian



Anna has been a member of the Teen Advisory Board at Nemours Children's Hospital where she has been a patient her entire life. After an extended stay at Nemours Children's Hospital last year, Anna realized that "many employees did not know how to interact with teenagers." When I was offered a spot on the council she worked "to help medical professionals understand teens' experiences in the hospital and better care for others and herself."

Erica Martin



A gifted artist, Erica is a frequent collaborator on charity zines and art projects which have raised tens of thousands of dollars for charities including No Kid Hungry, Save the Children Foundation, AID India, the Global Foodbanking Network and the Marsha P. Johnson Foundation. Through the Savannah College of Art and Design Erica helped build fences and paint homes for those in need. Here in Pennsylvania, she has assisted

park rangers with the removal of invasive plants and insects in our PA forests. Erica has also contributed her efforts to running an Alex's Lemonade Stand fundraiser. Erica chooses to use her art talent and her kindness to give back in so many ways.

Malavika Menon



Malavika is a kind, compassionate and talented young woman who wanted to find a way to use her love of Indian dance to give back to the community. Her passion for helping others also led to her interest in the medical field. Malavika has put these two interests together by co-founding, along with her sister, an organization called Nandanam Arts. The sisters perform for dementia patients as well as at senior centers to

help with mental relaxation and provide feelings of well-being. Malavika also volunteers at the Melton Center, where she spends time each week tutoring and coaching

students in school subjects or simply listening and offering guidance when needed. Malavika spreads empathy in our community through her passion for giving back and her kind, caring personality.

Norah Plummer



Norah's commitment to helping within our community is exceptional. At Goshen Baptist Church she is a youth leader for both elementary and middle school programs, having done this for the last four years. She is also a basketball coach, currently coaching a 4th and 5th grade boys' team. Last year she coached 3rd and 4th graders and before coaching she was a referee dating back to middle school years. In the summer, she has

been a Vacation Bible School Leader. Norah was also involved with Sparkle Bright, a fundraiser supporting childhood cancer research at DuPont Hospital for Children. Norah is interested in helping those with hearing loss; participating in fundraisers through the Hearing Loss Association of America. This passion has made Norah decide to pursue a career in communication disorders in college.

Grace Rudderow



Grace's commitment to our West Chester community is extensive. Grace has been a committed tutor at the Melton Center throughout her high school years. She tutors elementary students and helps them with their reading. Grace has also volunteered at the Chester County Hospital helping to get patients and visitors signed in as well as delivering supplies. Her community outreach activities also include Bright Side

Buddies, where she is paired up with an elementary student in need of tutoring. Grace is the president of this club this year. Girl Up, the Fresh Food Foundation, and CARE are also school activities that Grace helps to extend into our community.

Patrick Tran



Patrick is a certified EMT and volunteers for the Goshen Fire Company as a volunteer EMS provider. As an EMS provider, Patrick volunteers many hours of time riding on ambulance calls, caring for patients, transporting sick individuals, and working shifts waiting for calls. This is a highly responsible position and it has taught Patrick how to approach problems in a responsible way. He feels his volunteering has

helped him grow as a person. Patrick has also worked hard for the House of Hope Charity Concert and has been part of the reason over 20 thousand dollars has been raised for the Home of the Sparrow over the past few years.

Jada Yard



Jada moved from New York City to West Chester, where she was introduced to many opportunities that she feels have helped her prepare for life after high school. One important opportunity was her volunteer opportunity at YMWIC, (Young Men and Women in Charge). Many of the students that Jada tutors in this program come from the greater Philadelphia area and need support with their school work. Jada

is providing support from elementary to the high school level in math, English, reading, and history. She even creates her own questions and quizzes to give extra help and provide a lasting understanding of the material.



Henderson High School

Emily Brockson



As Vice President of the Best Buddies program, Emily dedicates many hours of her own time on evenings and weekends to ensure the success of this amazing program. She runs the Best Buddies Instagram page, and plans and organizes fundraisers and special events. Just this year alone, she organized a movie night for Life Skills students to hang out with their Best Buddies, a white elephant gift exchange, and a huge fundraiser at Locust Lane.

Jenaea Davenport



Jenaea's spirit of giving and serving shines in her church where she is vice president of the Young Missionary Group, helps lead services, and assists with young children at church. In addition, Jenaea's work extends to the March for Our Lives West Chester Chapter and Inspiring Civic Action group. Not stopping there, Jenaea also volunteers at the Melton Center in many capacities, including volunteering to help with the Martin

Luther King, Jr. Day of Service.

Caleb Fernandes



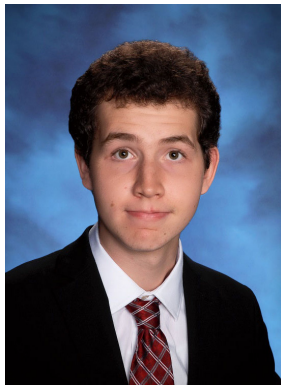
Caleb has been involved with service work since he was in middle school when he began his time as a volunteer at Chester County Hospital. Since then, Caleb has logged over 200 hours at the hospital. Caleb is also involved with the Red Cross making blankets and helping out with food drives, and with the Andrew Hicks Foundation mentoring youth from Chester. Caleb has remained committed to service because he finds it fun and rewarding to help others in his community.

Nishita Jakkam



Nishita Jakkam has a passion for service that she brings to all aspects of her life. Not only does Nishita have over 200 hours logged at Chester County Hospital, but she is also an officer for Henderson's National Honors Society and organizes events for the other members to earn service hours. Recently Nishita, as co-vice president of Henderson's neuroscience club, has organized a partnership with Henderson's mental health advocacy club to raise awareness for mental health.

Maximilian Moak



In addition to volunteering as a math tutor for Henderson students, Max has earned over 150 hours of volunteer service working with Chester County Hospital. His hospital service was particularly crucial during the heart of the pandemic as Max would assist nurses with administrative tasks, patient supply needs, and even helped make hats for newborn babies. Max says that he enjoys service because he “can give

back to the community which has done so much for [him].”

Anjana Pramod



Anjana’s dedication to service involves a wide range of organizations, including Kadavu, Girl Sparks, entrepreHER, and many more. She has logged countless hours with these organizations, including 200+ hours doing a virtual summer camp for Kadavu during the pandemic. Additionally, Anjana has donated substantial amounts of her profits from businesses she started in Junior Achievement to local charities.

Meet Shah



Meet's volunteer service has been dedicated to the betterment of others. He has volunteered at the Chester County Hospital, maintaining the routines of patients and patient rooms, as well as being a tutor at YMWIC in the local Chester branch. Meet has also earned hours working with the Good Fellowship Ambulance and EMT training institute. Recently, Meet completed a research project studying diabetes and its effect on college students, demonstrating his continued commitment to understanding and helping others.

Simeon Shappell-Smith



Simeon has demonstrated a commitment to service through his work with GoodWorks, an organization that completes home repairs for low-income families. He also volunteers for YouthWorks, an organization that goes on service trips to work on building houses and renovating schools. In addition, Web Dance, an organization that facilitates dances for adults with special needs, is one of Simeon's volunteer activities. Simeon is thankful for the deep love for service instilled in him by his parents at a young age.

Aryan Sharma



Aryan's commitment to service is shown in the hours he has spent helping patients and staff as a volunteer at Chester County Hospital, as well as his commitment to spreading cultural awareness by doing graphic design and participating in plays with the Bengali Association of Greater Philadelphia. Previously, Aryan had regularly volunteered at the Brandywine Nursing Hall, playing violin for the

residents. Recently, Aryan has demonstrated his commitment to service in the medical field by completing a research project on parathyroid cancer at the University of Pennsylvania.

Christopher Simms



Serving his community as a volunteer EMT, Christopher describes his work as "the best way to help...a way that I knew would make a difference." In addition to countless hours spent working as an EMT and an EMT youth program leader, he has also volunteered as a CCD teacher and camp counselor and feels helping others gives him "a sense of fulfillment" that inspires him to continue these endeavors.

Rustin High School

Corinne Atwell



As a girl scout for 12 years, Corinne Atwell has devoted hundreds of hours providing meals to the less fortunate or working with younger girls developing their leadership and service skills. Corinne says that “volunteer work gives me a sense of purpose” and that she has “grown a love for helping” others. Through her community service she sees that she can create an “immense difference in someone else’s life.”

Nora Jiang



As an artistic swimmer, Nora is not only a skilled competitor but she gives back to the sport by volunteering many hours on its national rulemaking board. Nora’s work contributed to the rules that currently govern the sport and enhance artistic swimming. Nora says that she was inspired by a mentor teammate that helped her learn the sport who also gave of her time to help teammates and the sport.

Sehaj Kaur



While she was volunteering as an Emergency Medical Technician for Good Fellowship fire company, Sehaj observed many people who were homeless or otherwise in need of food and basic supplies. So, she created the Comfy Corner which is a group that collects non-perishable food and other necessary items to distribute to those in need. In addition to all this Sehaj also volunteers for the West Chester Voting Club and organized the Health Occupation Students of America Club.

Connor Orkin



As an Eagle Scout and youth volunteer at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Connor has devoted hundreds of hours in community service. His Eagle Scout project was clearing and planting over 200 trees in a portion of the Plum Run Preserve in East Bradford. In addition, Connor has been an important member of the Vacation Bible School and Sunday School programs at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Nicholas Piccone



Nick is an Eagle Scout and volunteer at Advent Lutheran Church. For his Eagle Scout project Nick coordinated a team of volunteers to provide a water drainage system for his Church. The Church no longer has a flooding problem thanks to Nick and his team. Nick has also volunteered numerous hours at his Church as an usher.

Bobby Ristine



Bobby's Eagle Scout project involved him clearing a significant portion of the Serpentine Barrens Preserve. After clearing that portion of the Preserve Bobby led a team of volunteers in re-seeding barren areas with indigenous plants and repairing trails in the Preserve including removing some 30 dead trees. Bobby also volunteers for the Goshen County Fair and his Church.

Gavin Snyder



Gavin's annual Christmas holiday fundraiser for the Brandywine Valley SPCA has become a local holiday tradition. Decorating his home with Christmas lights and displays he attracts hundreds of people a night who are invited to donate to the Brandywine Valley SPCA. Gavin has raised over \$30,000 for the Brandywine Valley SPCA.

Hudson Sunderlin



Hudson volunteers as a leader in the Young Life program. He values the ability to help other young people grow in their Christian faith. In addition, Hudson has volunteered with a summer soccer clinic and Thanksgiving meal deliveries. Hudson shared with us that helping others "grow in their faith through Young Life has been a life-changing experience."

Spencer Upton



As an Eagle Scout, Spencer designed a project to clean up and digitally record the graves at two local cemeteries. For just over 2,300 graves, Spencer entered data onto a national database of gravesites and tended to the gravesites with the help of volunteers that he coordinated as part of his Eagle Scout project. In the process, Spencer told us that “when he learned to put his trust in others, that makes anything easier to do.”

Gayatri Venkatesan

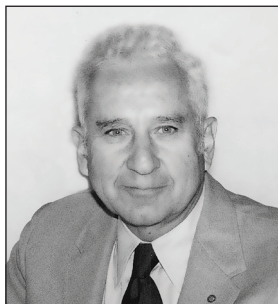


In addition to being a volunteer EMT for Good Fellowship Fire Company, Gayatri is a founding member of Pennsylvania Youth Vote. Gayatri volunteers her time educating youth about the importance of civic engagement and registering students to vote. In addition, she is a volunteer tutor for the Young Men and Women in Charge Foundation.

Dr. Elwood M. Spellman

School Board Member & President

1951-1969



Dr. Elwood M. Spellman

Known as “Ossie” to his friends, Dr. Elwood M. Spellman epitomized the spirit of volunteerism and citizenship that is the basis of the Spellman Humanitarian Award. Much of his volunteer service centered on the West Chester schools, but he was active in other community causes as well.

In 1951, Dr. Spellman was first elected to serve on the West Chester Borough School Board. That board oversaw the operation of what were then elementary schools in the borough, serving borough residents only. Similarly, the townships that are part of the district today elected their own school boards and operated their own separate elementary schools.

Dr. Spellman served as Borough Board President from 1958 to 1966. He also headed a Joint High School Board, which oversaw the operation of junior and senior high schools attended by students from both the borough and the townships.

In 1966, all elementary and secondary schools in the borough and the townships were consolidated into the West Chester Area School District. Dr. Spellman was the first President of the Area School Board. He stepped down as Area Board President in 1968 and retired from all Board service in 1969.

Dr. Spellman led the various municipal school boards through the many difficult decisions that accompanied the 1966 consolidation. There were serious financial issues created by the need to combine the debt service and budgets of eight school systems into one. There were building and staffing issues as all of the schools became the responsibility of a centralized administration. The curriculum in the various elementary schools also needed to be standardized.

At the same time, the district was experiencing a period of increasing racial tensions. Just before and after consolidation, Dr. Spellman responded to substantial charges of discrimination against African-American students in the secondary schools. He put into place a framework upon which the district has built as it has worked to ensure equitable treatment of all students.

In addition to his School Board service, Dr. Spellman was active in the Boy Scouts, Rotary Club, YMCA, and Westminster Presbyterian Church. He was a respected area dentist. He was retired from the dentistry when he died on April 16, 1993, at the age of 77.