



Pittsburgh's NextUp Awards Crown Area's Top Young Volunteers

Program awards scholarships to individuals showing commitment to community

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES, October 7, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last night, the Blood Science Foundation, philanthropic arm of Vitalant®, hosted the NextUp Awards honoring young people who are dedicating their time and talents to making a difference in others' lives through fundraising, philanthropy, volunteerism, and activism.

Hosted by Marty Griffin and Kristine Sorensen, the NextUp Awards grant scholarships to young change agents, ages 18 or younger, who represent the best their generation has to offer with transformative commitment to their communities. This year gave special recognition to philanthropy work related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Each of our NextUp Finalists are the brightest examples of the young people who make our region so special," said Mark Giaquinto, President and CFO of Blood Science Foundation. "At the Blood Science Foundation, we're proud to honor their hard work and can't wait to see what they do next."

Finalists joined the Blood Science Foundation as honored guests at Pittsburgh's LeMont Restaurant, where winners of each of three age groups were announced, including 12 and Under, 13-15, and 16-18. Each winner received \$2,500 to further their education or to invest in their philanthropic or charitable programs. The first and second runners up also received \$500 each for the same purpose.

Nominees were evaluated based on their philanthropy's direct impact on the community, long-term/ongoing outcomes of the effort and whether the project can serve as a prototype for other communities.

Winners for each age group were:

12 years and under: Audrey Wetterau, 11 years old

After learning socks are the top item requested by homeless shelters, Audrey set out to start her Socks With A Mission not-for-profit organization to benefit the local homeless population. To date, she has raised thousands of dollars and distributed approximately 20,000 pairs of socks. Her actions have also benefitted local organizations including Light of Life Rescue

Mission, Familylinks, Inc., The Blue Kangaroo, Street MOMs, Shepherd's Heart Fellowship and Veterans Home, and Light in my City.

13 to 15 years: Sawyer Kilgour, 14 years old

Sawyer played a major role in creating school culture with his advanced technical skills. Sawyer dedicated his time to developing the back-end platform for a school store, and also set up the item inventory, pricing and delivery. His talents increased the overall positive recognition of students by faculty who award students PRIDE (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dependability, and Engagement) points to redeem at the store.

16 to 18 years: Lillian Ford, 16 years old

KindnessU: Lillian's Leaders Of Tomorrow was started by Lillian when she was just 13. Her organization is dedicated to addressing community needs through fundraising. KindnessU has raised close to \$40,000 in the past three years for patients in need. At Christmas, the organization adopts 50 senior citizens and several families to ensure they enjoy the holiday. The members of KindnessU volunteered over 4,500 hours at various events and organizations.

Blood Science Foundation extends a special thank you to the following companies and organizations who served as sponsors of the event: ProGuide, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Apple Box Studios, Mario Lemieux Foundation, Scarmazzi Homes, Wilshire Associates, Roger & Diane Oxendale, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Charles & Melinda Bracken, and media sponsor Pittsburgh Magazine.

Event proceeds benefit Vitalant's High School Scholarship Program which provides annual funding to 100 local high schools that hold Vitalant blood drives.

For full information on all the finalists, please visit:

<https://bloodsciencefoundation.org/2021nextupawards/>.

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About Blood Science Foundation

As the tax-exempt, charitable arm of Vitalant®—the largest independent, nonprofit blood services provider in the U.S.—Blood Science Foundation raises awareness and secures funding for Vitalant's blood collection, transfusion, and research ecosystems.

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