# 2026 401(k) Champion® Award Winners Announced on National 401(k) Day

*Three Champions® named after nationwide search to find workplace 401(k) savers who "love" their 401(k)s*



2026 Winners

STAMFORD, CT, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The 401(k) Champion® Award Competition today announced three winners in its nationwide search to find workplace 401(k) savers who "love" their 401(k)s and inspire colleagues and friends to participate in and maximize their benefits in tax-advantaged retirement savings plans.

The three 401(k) Champions for 2026 are: Dr. Paras Khandhar of Southfield, MI; Thane Walton of Mesa, AZ;  and Jonathan Steen of Waikoloa, HI. Winners exemplified the spirit of the award, telling their personal 401(k) stories of interacting with others and encouraging them to save for retirement.

> Today we honor the inspirational stories of our three 401(k) Champions® titleholders for 2026,"
>
> *Vytas Kisielius*

"This year's competition has been intense, with applications from 24 different states from Alabama to Washington," commented Vytas Kisielius, director of the competition. Eleven finalists were chosen by a panel of independent judges. Three winners earned the title of 401(k) Champion® for 2026, and eight received recognition as Honorable Mentions.

"Today we honor the inspirational stories of our three 401(k) Champions® titleholders for 2026," said Kisielius:

Dr. Paras Khandhar, Vice-Chief of Pediatrics at Corewell Health and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at William Beaumont School of Medicine, shared this insight:

"I regularly meet with new residents, who have no idea about or sense of financial literacy, and it

makes my day to get them started on the way of prudently investing in their future.  My passion is to help make financial literacy possible, ensure people understand the importance of having a retirement account, and help start and guide them on their path toward financial independence. I wholeheartedly believe that even small moves now, like learning how to open an account, taking advantage of a company match, etc., can have a profound butterfly effect for their future."

Thane Walton, Practice Management and Retirement executive for United Planners, was motivated to help others:

"When I heard Julie on the Motley Fool podcast, it resonated with my passion for helping and encouraging others to take advantage of the amazing benefit their 401(k) offers. For me, being a 401(k) Champion® is not just about knowing the rules or explaining the match. It's about helping people see what one good decision, repeated year after year, can become. My own 401(k) journey started with a simple nudge from my sister. I've spent much of my career trying to give that same nudge to others. Like planting a tree, the best time to start was years ago. The second-best time is today!"

Jonathan Steen, Project Manager for Goodfellow Brothers, talked about financial freedom:

"I was never taught about compound interest, but when I saw the power of how it worked, I was sold on investing and maximizing my 401(k). I tell my colleagues and friends 'Retirement is not an age, it's a cash balance that lets you live off it comfortably.'  I appreciate my 401(k) because it gives me a clear path toward financial freedom. To me, retirement savings are about having choices later in life: when to retire, how much time to spend with family, and whether I have to continue working because I need the paycheck. Every contribution is buying a little more of that future freedom."

We were inspired by these award winners' stories and their passion for sharing their experiences and journeys to help others achieve their financial goals.

For advisers, employers and plan sponsors, the widening gap between participation and financial literacy presents a clear opportunity to move beyond enrollment and toward education that supports more informed and confident retirement decisions. The 401(k) Champion® Award Competition is an entrant in addressing that opportunity.

The competition was created and funded by Jackson, Grant Investment Advisers, Inc. and the firm's founder, Julie Jason, a proponent of financial literacy education, whose first book on 401(k)s was published in 1996 ("You and Your 401(k)").  There is no cost to enter the competition and no sponsorship commitment. The pro bono effort is entirely supported by Jackson, Grant.

About Jackson, Grant Investment Advisers, Inc.

Jackson, Grant Investment Advisers, Inc., based in Stamford, Connecticut, is an independent, fee-only Registered Investment Adviser serving high-net-worth individuals and families. (The firm is NOT a 401(k) vendor.) Founded by Julie Jason, JD, LLM, the firm operates as a fiduciary in a strictly educational, sales-free environment, providing customized investment counsel grounded in disciplined research, transparent reporting and long-term planning. Through pro bono initiatives such as the 401(k) Champion® Competition and Julie Jason's nationally syndicated financial columns and award-winning books, the firm extends its commitment to financial literacy well beyond its private client practice. In presenting her fourth Excellence in Financial Literacy Award (EIFLE) to Julie for her book “The Discerning Investor,” Rachel Gordon, executive director of the Institute for Financial Literacy called the work that of “a trusted voice of retirement investing." Learn more at jacksongrant.us; juliejason.com; and 401kchampion.com.

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