



Everyday Heroes award winners announced

Cox Communications and the AIA awarded more than \$40,000 in scholarships and prizes to outstanding students

Cox Communications and the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) bestowed the Everyday Heroes awards May 17 on high school students, teachers, coaches, administrators and officials who demonstrate character and honor, both on and off the field, in communities around the state.

Rick Dubek, an award winning TV journalist with NBC 12 and Fox 10 hosted the sixth annual Everyday Heroes gala at the Orpheum Theatre, which was broadcast live in Phoenix and Tucson beginning at 7 p.m. on [Cox7](http://Cox7.com). Visit Cox7.com to see the times and dates the show will replay on Cox7.

The 2008 Everyday Heroes award recipients are:

AIA Student of the Year Award (Female)

The winner is **Alexandra Wodka** from Nogales High School. Alexandra participated in volleyball, track and soccer while also serving as a student council member, sports medicine team trainee, SADD Club member, participant on the Drama Tech Crew, and the secretary for MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, and Science) club. She also found time to volunteer with the Community Tutor Program, Habitat for Humanity, Food Bank, Sacred Heart Church, and the Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital. Alexandra's accolades include most valuable player for varsity girls soccer for three years, most improved player for varsity volleyball, student of the month, honors diploma recipient, international Baccalaureate candidate, and employee of the month at the Esplendor Resort.

AIA Student of the Year Award (Male)

The winner is **Tod Ryan Workman** from Queen Creek High School. Tod is a well rounded individual with honors in both athletics and academics, including student body vice president, Student of the Month multiple times, Bulldog Award for exceeding school and districts expectations, Defensive Captain for the football team in 2007, Outstanding Wrestler in the 2008 State Tournament, and maintaining the highest GPA on the football team for two years in a row. He has also contributed thousands of service hours in his community working on an Eagle Scout project, canned food drives, coaching youth wrestling, and participating in a 100 mile wheelbarrow run for a cancer victim.

Scholar Athlete of the Year Awards

1A/2A/3A Boys

Phillip Bullington from Benson High School is the winner here. Phillip earned varsity letters in wrestling, football, track and field, and golf. He was voted varsity team MVP, team captain, and second team All-State in both football and wrestling. Phillip's competitive and dedicated spirit is also reflected in academics with his involvement in programs like the academic decathlon and Future Business Leaders of America. He will attend Chadron State College where he plans to wrestle and study architectural engineering.

1A/2A/3A Girls

Melissa Gifford from Pusch Ridge Christian Academy in Tucson is a four year varsity basketball and volleyball player, and was named Varsity Player of the Year and first team All-Region in volleyball. She also ran varsity track for two seasons, where she placed first in Long Jump in the region her junior year. Melissa also shines academically, as a three-year National Honors Society Member and graduating third in her class.

4A/5A Boys

Bryan Berens has been quarterback of the varsity football team at Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix for three years, but his school spirit extends beyond the football field to leading cheers at soccer and basketball games. He was named Desert Valley Region first team Quarterback for two years, first team All-State in 2007, and a National Merit Commended Scholar. With his passion for writing, Bryan hopes to study journalism and someday become a journalist or screenwriter.

4A/5A Girls

Aubri Carman from Mountain Pointe High School in Ahwatukee has lettered in varsity soccer and cross country all four years and lettered in track and field three years. She was voted varsity team captain for cross country and soccer, as well as MVP for cross country twice. Aubri helped earned her school State Championships in cross country and soccer, and was named second team All-Region in soccer for three years. As president of the National Honors Society, she will graduate second in her class with a 4.0 GPA.

Scholar Activity Participant of the Year Awards

1A/2A/3A Boys

Wade Crossman from Blue Ridge High School in Lakeside is our winner. As president of his school's choir, a student ambassador, and physics club member, Wade embodies leadership. His inspirational speaking abilities have earned him numerous awards, including State Champion in Duo Interpretation. Wade will attend New York University and hopes to become a playwright.

1A/2A/3A Girls

Danielle Bäck of Tempe Preparatory Academy is our winner. Danielle has been on the speech and debate team for two years, and as co-captain, helped lead her team in their two-time 1A-3A State Championships. Her speaking talent has earned her multiple honors, including second at Winter Trophy for Extemporaneous Speaking. Danielle is also a 2008 Flinn Finalist and a peer tutor at her school. She plans to attend Yale to study journalism.

4A/5A Boys

Michael Malpiedi from Seton Catholic High School in Chandler has performed in multiple school plays, including “Bye Bye Birdie” and playing the bass guitar in the musical “Godspell”. A French club member, speech and debate participant, and National Merit Finalist, Michael exemplifies enthusiasm and dedication for his academics and activities. He is also a four year football player, a member of the Seton orchestra and a campus student ambassador.

4A/5A Girls

Nicole Tin-Lok Jiam from Desert Vista High School in Phoenix has two passions in her life, music and debate. She has been a member of Desert Vista’s Chamber and Symphony Orchestras playing the viola and violin since her freshmen year. Nicole has also been a member of her school’s speech and debate team for three years with multiple awards including first place in the Jack Howe Long Beach Forensic National Tournament Novice Policy Debate. Her leadership skills are shown through her involvement with her school and community programs such as president of HOSA and Desert Vista’s Orchestra Council. After graduating as her class valedictorian in May she will attend the University of Arizona.

Coach of the Year Award

Don Petranovich has spent the past 40 years coaching and teaching at Winslow High School. He earned the school seven girls basketball state championships and seven state runner-ups. Don is also a member of the Arizona Coaches Association, serves as 3A Conference president, and was elected to the Arizona Coaches Hall of Fame in 1993. His school and community obviously hold a lot of respect and pride in Don, which is why they named the school gymnasium after him in 2005.

Administrator of the Year Award

Connie Harris of the Deer Valley Unified School District in Phoenix is our Administrator of the Year. She has dedicated her life to helping develop and educate thousands of students in Arizona for more than 30 years. Her strength, knowledge, and ambition have been empowering her community on multiple levels. NASSP’s Principal of the Year for Arizona, NCA Circle of Excellence Award, and Administrative Pride Award are just a few of the accolades she has received during her career. Connie has

been a teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, and Director of School Operations at schools across the valley, but is currently the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services in the Deer Valley Unified School District.

Official of the year

Ken Farmer has been teaching, directing, and officiating in Ajo for the past 35 years. He has officiated high school volleyball for 11 years and football and basketball for 25 years. He was selected by his students and colleagues as Teacher of the Year and 1A South Athletic Director of the Year. Ken also gives back to his community through the Ajo Community Safety Council and Victor Salazar Scholarship Fund.

Cox7-AZ After the Bell Award

Teen Lifeline peer counseling hotline is our Cox7-AZ After the Bell Award winner. Did you know that each year 32,000 Arizona teens attempt suicide, and that Arizona has ranked in the top 10 states for teen suicide since 1985? This is why Teen Lifeline and their peer-to-peer counseling program is so important. It provides troubled youth from all across Arizona safe and confidential counseling, 24/7, from a trained peer on issues ranging from relationships and school to abuse and suicide. The program also gives life skills training to dozens of youth volunteers and enables them to save lives and make a positive influence in their community.

Blue Cup Award

Winslow High School has been recognized by the AIA as a Pursuing Victory With Honor School of Distinction for the last three years. They strictly follow the PVWH program, including hanging banners of the Six Pillars, holding school-wide assemblies, requiring all students and coaches to sign a Code of Conduct, electing athletes from each sport to serve on the PVWH Captain's Council, and reading PVWH statements over the PA system at all home games. In addition, opposing schools are greeted by Winslow students when they arrive for a sporting event, shown to their locker rooms, and the officials are provided with drinks and snacks at halftime. They also honor select students and coaches who have exemplified the Six Pillars at the end of every sports season on their Wall of Fame.

Peoria High School initiated the "Mission, Vision and Values Committee" in response to low student participation and staff morale. Taking ideas from both the Character Counts and Pursuing Victory With Honor programs, the school defined their mission: to maximize human potential; their vision: to challenge and support each other to be the best; and their values: integrity, honesty and humility. These standards are expected of everyone at Peoria High – students, teachers, administrators, aides, secretaries, custodians, etc. The mission, vision and values are promoted at the school with banners, posters in every classroom, all-school assemblies and t-shirts given to students who demonstrate these values on campus.

Cox Technology in Education Award

Dave Cornelius' media communications program at Arcadia High School in Phoenix is the pinnacle of student-driven communications, not only in the district but across the state of Arizona. Students work on projects such as simulcasting events on closed-circuit TV, cable, Windows Media and QuickTime streams, web casting district board meetings and special events, and managing their own networks and servers, as well as the media network that provides services for the district's professional development, corporate training and communications departments. Under Dave's leadership, Arcadia has become the first high school in Arizona to make the switch to HD production and delivery and the first to fully implement the Arts, A/V Technology and Communications Career Cluster.

Drug Free AZ Inspiration Award

Erinn Pushor, from Horizon High School in Scottsdale, created a student organization called "So Fresh and So Clean," dedicated to changing the attitudes of students and parents about teen drinking and drug abuse. After losing her boyfriend to drug overdose, Erinn has lead school and community anti-drug events, brought together professionals to speak to students and parents, and is expanding the efforts of her club to other schools in the area. In a special presentation by Maricopa County Attorney Andrew P. Thomas, the *Drug Free AZ Inspiration Award* was presented to Erinn.

Cox Communications Arizona

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