



27th Annual Spellman Humanitarian Awards

April 2, 2025

**Spellman Education Center
Exton, PA**

West Chester Area Education Association and West Chester Area School District

**proudly present the
2025 Spellman Humanitarian Award Recipients**



EAST

Michelle Chen
Jada Cooper
Nuala Coyle
Sophia Fu
Wesley Hiester
Sneha Mahadevan
Pooja Menon
Devika Nair
Keira O'Flynn
Amelia Piombino

HENDERSON

Peter Kennedy
Madeline Miller
Jayashri Muthukrishnan
Elena Patarcity
Benjamin Pentz
Adam Pontzer
Tara Rameshmanikandan
Sophie Rivell
Talia Salome
Ruhi Trasi

RUSTIN

Leah Ambrosine
Victoria D'Ulisse
Macy Fisher
Drew Gaffney
Elina Huang
Diya Lakshmanan
Henry Matonis
Emily Miller
Diana Munoz-Lopez
Emma Skinner



Congratulations students!

We are very proud of you. We thank and praise the families 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. Scott deLone

West Chester Area Education Association

Welcome

Dr. James Conley

*Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools, West Chester
Area School District*

Spellman Legacy

Dr. Kalia Reynolds

Deputy Superintendent, West Chester Area School District

Presentation of Awards

Mr. Scott deLone

West Chester Area Education Association

Closing Remarks

Mr. Scott deLone

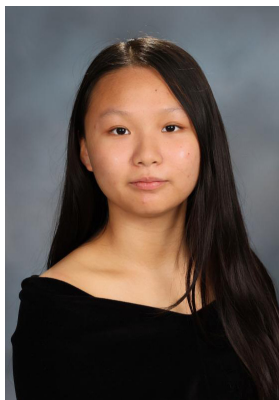
West Chester Area Education Association



Special thanks to our talented student musicians from
East High School for their music!

East High School

Michelle Chen



Teaching others is core to Michelle's service. She serves as a teaching assistant at the HuaXia Chinese School and a New Direction Coach at the Melton Center. Her passion for volunteering extends to the arts where she volunteers for a theatre company and is active in planning the House of Hope Charity Concert. Michelle reflects that her volunteer experiences have taught her adaptability, responsibility, and the importance of making a positive

impact in her community. Through these experiences, she has developed a deep appreciation for commitment and collaboration in serving others.

Jada Cooper



Jada's experiences with Jack and Jill have shaped her belief that true service goes beyond distributing resources—it is about creating access to meaningful opportunities. This realization has deepened her commitment to service that not only meets immediate needs but also empowers others with dignity and respect. Jada is deeply committed to ensuring equity, whether by organizing overdue dental screenings

for adults, restructuring food pantries to resemble grocery stores, or helping preschoolers select gifts for their parents.



Nuala Coyle



Nuala's volunteer work spans organizations such as Family Service of Chester County, East Goshen Township, Chester County Art Association, Brandywine Red Clay Alliance, and Viking Volunteers. However, her most meaningful role is coaching Girls on the Run, where she watched a once-shy, tearful girl transform—laughing, joking, and embracing her “Star Power.”

Reflecting on the program's impact, Nuala shared, “As a former Girls on the Run participant, I know firsthand how life-changing it can be for young girls.”

Sophia Fu



Sophia has spent four years and countless hours improving her community through the Chester County Library and the Melton Center. For Sophia, self-efficacy fosters personal success, confidence, and enhanced academic performance—everything we hope to see in a joyful child with grand dreams and aspirations.

Volunteering at the Melton Center enables her to assist communities in raising their expectations for the individuals they support, ultimately creating opportunities and shaping a brighter future.



Wesley Hiester



Wesley shares, “Advocating for myself and other LGBTQ+ students has given me a sense of purpose and something meaningful to fight for.” Committed to fostering inclusivity and equity, Wesley is actively involved with the Aavidum Club, Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA), the WCASD Student Advocacy Group, and March for Our Lives. Wesley works tirelessly to promote mental health awareness, inclusivity, and student rights.

Whether creating safe spaces or amplifying marginalized voices, he demonstrates an unwavering commitment to positive change.

Sneha Mahadevan



Sneha’s commitment to service includes her work tutoring students in math through the Jeremy E. Watson Educational Center and helping provide children with clothing and other necessities through Cradles to Crayons. Sneha shares, “Tutoring math with a nonprofit organization over the past few years has become something I love and find deeply fulfilling. It first made me realize that one person has the power to

significantly impact another’s success.”

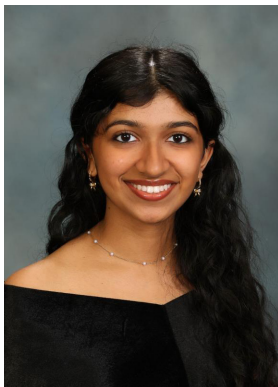


Pooja Menon



Pooja's most cherished experiences come from tutoring at the Melton Center and volunteering at Alzheimer's facilities. At Melton, she helped a struggling student gain confidence, reinforcing her belief that education is a "passport to freedom." Through Nandanam Arts (www.nandanamarts.org), the organization she co-founded with her sister, she promotes emotional wellness and motor skill engagement through Indian dance performances at Alzheimer's and senior centers nationwide.

Devika Nair



For Devika, volunteering is more than just community service—it's an opportunity to apply her academic and interpersonal skills in meaningful ways. She is actively involved with the Melton Center, Bright Side Buddies Tutoring, and Chester County Library Youth Services. However, her most rewarding work is at the Jacob's Technology Center library. Devika assists patrons—especially seniors and those without internet access—with job applications, tax filing, and digital literacy, empowering others through technology.



Keira O'Flynn



As a volunteer at Project Libertad, Keira tutors ESL students in her community, an experience that has pushed her beyond her comfort zone. Working closely with students has strengthened her empathy, leadership, and understanding of immigrant challenges while also improving her communication skills and deepening her commitment to making a positive impact. Keira's volunteer work does not end there;

she also dedicates her time to the SPCA, coaching young goalies and the Mitzvah Circle's Teen Ambassador Program.

Amelia Piombino



Amelia has dedicated herself to service in many capacities, including at Trinity Treasures Thrift Store, East Goshen Fire Company, Home of the Sparrow, and Habitat for Humanity. Her experiences with Habitat for humanity, in particular, have shaped her outlook on volunteering as well as life. She believes that helping others is not just about fixing houses but also about offering kindness, understanding, and support when it

is needed most.



Henderson High School

Peter Kennedy



Through his extensive work with the Epilepsy Foundation of Eastern Pennsylvania over the past three years, Peter has collaborated with the Pennsylvania state legislature by conducting policy research to support more inclusive legislation. In addition, he has worked to promote epilepsy awareness through staff training in schools, including safety measures and seizure recognition. Moreover, Peter, an Eagle Scout, has contributed to his community through his service project and has volunteered with the West Chester Food Cupboard and the Office of the Chester County Commissioners.

Madeline Miller



Madeline's service efforts are both diverse and plentiful as she's worked with animals as a volunteer for the Brandywine Valley SPCA, as a teaching assistant at a dance studio, and as an academic coach for the Charles E. Melton Center, where she has contributed almost 400 hours of service. Madeline has also devoted time as a board member for the GlamourGals, where she spends Sundays visiting nursing homes to paint the nails of the residents. She successfully secured sponsorship from the GlamourGirls National organization to get art kits to work on with the residents as well.



Jayashri Muthukrishnan



Jayashri's varied community service efforts involve a diverse array of activities from serving as a volunteer at multiple libraries, Good Fellowship, Main Line Health, and CHOP. Through her service in these activities, Jayashri says she has strengthened her compassion and empathy, seen firsthand the value of teamwork, and has a "renewed commitment to advocating for children's health and well-being." Over her high school

career, she has dedicated more than 1000 hours to service her community. In addition to these experiences, Jayashri also works with the Environmental Club at Henderson.

Elena Patarcity



Elena has dedicated many hours to Community Volunteers in Medicine, a local nonprofit that provides free healthcare for low-income uninsured families. As the childcare coordinator for patient education meetings, she ensures that women who might otherwise lack childcare can attend sessions on feminine health issues. Elena's passion in this endeavor has inspired her to seek a career in public policy so she can help "create an

environment that empowers women."



Benjamin Pentz



Ben's volunteer experience includes various park cleanups, and most importantly, extensive hours working with the Boy Scouts, as a Den Chief and on his Eagle Scout project. Combined, Ben has over 200 hours devoted to scouting. For his Eagle Scout project, he created and built an informational kiosk for Paradise Nature Center, leaving a lasting legacy for people to enjoy for years to come.

Ben feels volunteerism pays him back "through the appreciation of those who [he] helped."

Adam Pontzer



Adam has spent many hours volunteering in Boy Scouts, where he built a water trails kiosk for a boat launch in his township, but additionally, he has also helped establish a chapter of Aidan's Heart Foundation at Henderson and serves on the Youth Leadership Team for this foundation. Through his work with Aidan's Heart, Adam volunteers to teach his peers CPR to save lives. He feels strongly that in the event of a

sudden cardiac arrest, even a little bit of help could save a life.



Tara Rameshmanikandan



As the co-founder and director of Project CleanSlate, Tara has made a tangible impact by addressing the opioid epidemic in Philadelphia. She's coordinated Narcan distribution and training initiatives that have saved lives and empowered others to act in a crisis situation. Her advocacy extends nationally as the CADCA Region 3 Representative where she has worked with senators and national leaders. In addition, she

serves her local EMS Corps and the Chester County Hospital to promote health equity and community education.

Sophie Rivell



Sophie's volunteer pursuits spread across many arenas and hours. She has dedicated over 200 hours to being an academic coach and Girls Leadership Program founder at the Melton Center. Additionally, Sophie has worked as a student advisory member to Senator Carolyn Comitta and with the Fund for Women and Girls Civic G+. On top of all this, Sophie promoted a new voter initiative that resulted in voter

registration drive at more than 200 schools. Her initiative was the largest voter registration event for high schoolers in the United States.



Talia Salome



Talia has volunteered nearly 200 hours with the Fund for Women and Girls Civic G+, and has impacted a wide variety of other areas, such as serving the West Chester Food Cupboard, joining the student advisory council for a state senator, registering new voters, and serving as a Forbes Student Research Mentor. Additionally, Talia works with Girls Spark, whose mission is to empower girls to be their true selves, where

she has worked towards the creation of their career and wellness development workshops.

Ruhi Trasi



Ruhi has graciously given over almost 200 hours to the Good Fellowship Ambulance Company as an ambulance attendant. Additionally, she has volunteered nearly 150 hours with Spring Brook Farm, a camp for children with special needs. Ruhi feels that the skills she developed at Spring Brook have helped her in “communicating with her peers and with patients [she serves] in the ambulances.” She now works to guide other volunteer counselors. In

addition, Ruhi makes time to foster dogs and cats in need of homes.



Rustin High School

Leah Ambrosine



Leah's journey began at a young age when she helped her mom with an event called Feed My Starving Children. Since that life-changing moment, she has volunteered at multiple events sponsored by her church and the local township. Leah has also spent many hours working with organizations that focus on combating hunger, such as the Chester County Food Bank, the Share Food Program, and Rise Against Hunger. Leah has also assisted the

Unite for Her and Everyday Hope organizations. Leah's efforts have enriched the lives of children and adults in her community and Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Victoria D'Ulisse



One of Victoria's philanthropic activities was inspired by her empathy for families who experienced the harsh reality of battling cancer. Her father, while hospitalized with cancer, told Victoria that he thought there should be more activities for the patients to occupy their time. Victoria started a nonprofit organization called Everyday Hope that collects items like playing cards, magazines, and hand cream to distribute to patients in hospitals. Victoria has also



volunteered many hours to the Healthy Kids Run series, the Thornbury Township Christmas Train Ride, as well as helping with grassroots campaigns and assisting with youth sporting events. Victoria's desire to make the world a better place comes from the heart and it is her true passion.

Macy Fisher



Macy embodies the very essence of this award through her academic excellence, unwavering integrity and deep commitment to service. Macy volunteers at her local dance company, church and Heart of Surfing, a nonprofit that offers free surfing lessons with children with autism or developmental disabilities. She described her interactions with a child in this program as life changing and we can be sure the child felt the same way. Macy's leadership in the

Rustin Black Student Union and the multi-faceted roles the Black Student Union plays in the school and local community speaks to her initiative and passion for advocacy



Drew Gaffney



Drew is deeply committed to giving back to his community through his years of volunteer work with the West Chester Food Cupboard. Drew feels that everyone deserves to have food and other items despite their circumstances in life. Beyond his volunteer efforts, he also helped raise money for the Food Cupboard by organizing and facilitating a charity 5 K color run and a charity 3 on 3 basketball tournament. Drew has also volunteered his time and talent to local entities including the YMCA and Westtown Day. Drew's ability to see the big picture and help his neighbors in need is reflective of the intent of this award.

Elina Huang



Elina's desire to spread happiness to children and provide them with love and support is one of the greatest motivations behind her volunteer opportunities. Elina spent many hours bringing joy to the participants in activities such as Trunk or Treat, the Wildcat Carnival, and Bingo Night. In addition to working with children, Elina has contributed her enthusiasm and energy to the annual Stream and Campus cleanup. Elina has participated in numerous volunteer activities including Unite for Her events and a Charity Court Classic tournament. Elina's kindness and collaborative "Can- Do" spirit speaks volumes about her capacity to improve people's lives for the better.



Diya Lakshmanan



Diya is a force of nature when it comes to making a difference in her school and local community. Diya works hard to create a culture of inclusion and respect. Diya volunteered many hours with the Brandywine Valley SPCA where she enjoyed working with the animals and other volunteers. Diya also volunteered at a polling station on Election Day as a way of channeling her desire to engage in her civic duty. Diya loves to paint and she

volunteered her artistic talent to a charitable face-painting event. While we cannot see the final products on the children's faces tonight, we have no doubt that her artwork was exquisite.

Henry Matonis



Henry has demonstrated a strong sense of community service and civic engagement while serving as a Boy Scout, making him a worthy recipient of the Spellman Award. Some of the notable tasks that he has undertaken are cleaning and repairing local parks, painting benches, and sprucing up trails. Henry has also volunteered his time assisting younger scouts with various programs. Henry is looking forward to attaining the rank of Eagle Scout soon and he is also planning a

food drive for the local Food Cupboard. Henry has stepped up to help those in need time and time again.



Emily Miller



Emily's commitment to community service and her involvement in charitable activities has truly been impressive. She volunteered her time with local organizations such as the West Chester Food Cupboard, the Salvation Army, and Samaritan's Purse. She has personally delivered baskets to oncology patients and medical staff at Penn Hospital in conjunction with Everyday Hope. Emily has also played a pivotal role in organizing fundraising events that

benefit UNICEF, CHOP, and Bringing Hope Home. Her goal of becoming a nurse has been nurtured by her volunteer experiences and interactions with patients in the hospital setting.

Diana Munoz-Lopez



Diana's volunteerism efforts very much reflect the motto that she lives by: "Do everything with love." Her community service is varied and expansive. In particular, her passion for helping young children in her community really stands out. Diana read books in Spanish and English to preschool children at her church and she assisted with events in the elementary schools. She volunteered with numerous clubs and their fundraising efforts such as the El

Puente Club, the Charity Court Classic, the MLK day of Service, and the Everyday Hope Club. Diana certainly steps up to assist and lead when the need arises making her a true humanitarian.



Emma Skinner

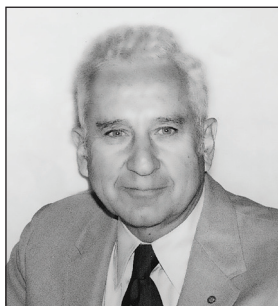


Emma's unwavering commitment to serving others and her strong determination to make the world a better place is exemplified by her work with Angels Against Addiction. Emma has also spent many hours fundraising and organizing for Unite for Her, Unicef Trunk or Treat and Bingo as well as a 5K race for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Everyday Hope. Emma has also assisted with events like the Westtown Thornbury Carnival and the annual campus clean up. When organizations put out the call for help, Emma always answers the call.



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.