

IMPROVING COMMUNITIES

PSATS Recognizes Youth Service Projects Through Annual Awards Program

BY **BRENDA WILT** / ASSISTANT EDITOR

Four youth organizations have won recognition in PSATS' 2015 Youth Awards Contest and were selected from a total of 19 entries. PSATS established the program to honor the valuable contributions young people make to their communities.

Each winning group receives a \$500 cash prize and a framed certificate, presented at the convention of their re-

spective county association of township officials. Highlights of their projects follow.

Recognizing youth service

PSATS created the Youth Awards in 1978 to honor the youth-oriented programs that improve the quality of life in townships and encourage youth involvement in local government. The Association will mail guidelines and entry forms for the 2016 contest next spring to

county associations, member townships, Boy and Girl Scout councils, school districts, Future Farmers of America, and the Penn State Extension.

For more information about the Youth Awards, call Brenda Wilt at PSATS at (717) 763-0930, ext. 123, or email bwilt@psats.org. Townships may also go to www.psats.org, choose the "Programs & Services" tab, and click on "PSATS Award Programs." Read about the winning entries below. ♦

Girl Scout Troop 270 and Kids Can Make a Change, Bucks County

The Scouts and their friends and families completed a number of projects in a "Salute to Service" to benefit local service members and veterans. Activities included:

- collecting and distributing to veterans more than 200 pounds of candy and snacks at Halloween; winter coats, hats, gloves, and scarves; and more than 100 pairs of winter boots and personal care packages;
- collecting and distributing 50 packages of toys, crayons, and books to children and organizing a Thanksgiving meal drive for donation to the Liberty USO;
- raising money to sponsor Christmas wreaths for veterans' graves and roses for the graves on Memorial Day; and
- "Adopting a Soldier" from Bucks County and sending packages to him in Afghanistan.



Girl Scout Troop 270 members pose with some of the items they collected for veterans. Their efforts were so well-received that participation grew to include families and friends, leading to the creation of another group, "Kids Can Make a Change."

Mahantongo Environmental Club, Schuylkill County

The members raised funds to build a pavilion that will act as an outdoor classroom for the elementary school and a meeting place for the environmental club. Project phases included:

- raising funds for the materials;
- securing the necessary permits;
- excavating the site; and
- planning, designing, and constructing the pavilion.

Thanks to club members, a new, multi-use pavilion is available on the grounds of the Mahantongo Elementary School. ►



Schuylkill Haven Area High School Biology Club, Schuylkill County

The students participated in the semi-annual Schuylkill Keep It Pretty (SKIP) highway cleanups. The project required:

- volunteering time on weekends in April and September, rain or shine;
- directing and supervising other student volunteers;
- navigating rough terrain and busy traffic corridors; and
- collecting trash in high-debris areas near shopping venues.

Schuylkill Haven Biology Club students clean up their community during one of two "Schuylkill Keep It Pretty" events. ➤



Derry FFA Chapter, Westmoreland County

The FFA chapter landscape design and technology transition classes created a veterans memorial on the school district campus. The project involved:

- designing the memorial and surrounding landscape;
- installing a cement pad, flag pole, cement sidewalk, and stone wall;
- building and installing memorial benches; and
- laying landscaping fabric, planting shrubs and flowers, and adding mulch.

FFA students find out just what it takes to prepare the site of this new veterans memorial for landscaping. ➤



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