



HEARTBEAT

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION NEWS

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The competition stays at the line, and Hoop Shooters are friends on and off the court. National Finalists Tommy Goodelle (left) and Armante Ventiquattro shake hands after dueling for the Getty Powell Award for the most free throws made overall. Read on to see who won!



FEELING LIKE A CHAMPION

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The culmination of everything the 2023 Hoop Shoot National Finalists had worked for was over in a 90-minute blink of an eye as the contest came and went on April 22. But it's no doubt that many Finalists are already back at the free throw line, practicing in the hopes of making it back next year.

"The Hoop Shoot is in our blood," says Faith Sjoberg, a member of the 2023 BackBoard, three-time Finalist, and a Legacy Award scholarship winner. "After I aged out, my parents joined the Elks to stay involved. The lessons you learn never leave you."

When the families arrive at the Hilton Chicago, the Elks roll out the red (and blue) carpet. With the logo projected onto the wall; dozens of red, white, blue, and basketball-shaped balloons; and the smiling faces of volunteers, even in the 30-floor, 2-million square foot building, the Hoop Shoot is easy to find.

"When we get to Chicago, no one calls the kids competitors or participants, they call them champions," says Nicole Goodelle, mother of four-time National Finalist Tommy, sponsored by Utica, N.Y., Lodge No. 33. "The amount of work that they put in to get to this point, it doesn't matter if they come home with a trophy or not. They all win."

The day before the contest, nerves were high and the tension was palpable. To take

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Mazie Buffetta, sponsored by Virginia, Minn., Lodge No. 1003, soaks in the setting for the Awards Banquet, the Hilton Chicago's beautiful Grand Ballroom. The Finalists got the royal treatment throughout their stay.

Champion, continued from page 1

IMPORTANT DATES

JULY 2-5:
Elks National Convention
in Minneapolis

AUGUST:
Fidelity Club Month

AUGUST 1:
2024 MVS Application Launch

AUGUST 15:
Impact Intent Deadline

SEPTEMBER 1:
2024 Legacy Awards Application
Launch

the kids' minds off the contest and, hopefully, tire them out so they could get a bit of sleep, the Elks hosted a FunFest at Soldier Field.

Guided tours took attendees behind the scenes of the NFL stadium, which is the home of the Chicago Bears. Guests got to visit the locker rooms, learn about the history of the stadium, and even take a step out onto the field itself, where the jumbotrons proudly cycled through the Finalists' trading cards. Families sat in the stands, eagerly waiting to snap photos.

In less than 24 hours, families were doing the same thing at the Wintrust Arena—home of the WNBA Chicago Sky and the DePaul Blue Devils—as the Finalist trading cards flashed across the jumbotron, signaling their entrance to the arena.

In an arena built to seat 10,000, there is a void of sound. The smallest sneeze or the groan of a seat tenses up everyone in the stands. The only sounds are the soft footsteps as the Finalists approach the line, the dribble of the ball on the floor, and the swish—or occasional clang—of the ball.

Attendees are asked to hold their applause. Many hold their breath, too.

Starting with the 8- to 9-year-olds and then proceeding in age-group order, each round of the contest starts with the Finalists—boys on one end, girls on the other—taking some practice shots to find their rhythm and feel out a new space. Then, the court is cleared, the lights are dimmed, and the Finalists run onto the court like the superstars they are.

As every contestant steps to the line, they can take up to five practice shots

The 2023 Hoop Shoot Alumni Board, a.k.a the BackBoard, jump for joy at the National Finals. It is much easier to rebound than it is to be the one standing at the line.



STANDING IN THE HALL OF FAME: NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

The 2023 Hoop Shoot National Finals saw six of the best youth free-throw shooters in the country take home the title of Frank Hise National Champion. Their names and pictures will be displayed in a digital exhibit at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass. The champions are:

Cadence Watson, Girls 8-9,
24/25, Coshocton, Ohio,
Lodge No. 376

Alexa Tien, Girls 10-11, 23/25,
9/10, Denver, Colo., Lodge No. 17

Morgan Miehle*, Girls 12-13,
25/25, Wheeling, W.Va.,
Lodge No. 28

Armante Ventiquattro, Boys 8-9,
25/25, Boonville, N.Y.,
Lodge No. 2158

Tennyson Smith, Boys 10-11,
24/25, Boise, Idaho,
Lodge No. 310

Tommy Goodelle*, Boys 12-13,
25/25, Utica, N.Y., Lodge No. 33

*Getty Powell Award winners given to the highest-scoring girl and boy overall.

To learn more about the Finalists, Champions, and Elks Hoop Shoot history, visit elkshoopshoot.org.

before shooting for score. Every competitor in the division takes 10 free throws and sits. After all 12 have shot, the Finalists return to the line in the same order to shoot the final 15, this time without practice shots.

Due to the long wait between turns, the 11th shot is pivotal.

"The 11th shot always got me," says Hoop Shoot broadcaster Lakyn Boltz, the Girls 8-9 champion in 2006 and a three-time Finalist. "My Dad used to keep stats on my 11th shot and could probably still tell you how often I missed."

For at least three of this year's Finalists, the 11th shot was no trouble at all. Armante Ventiquattro, sponsored by Boonville, N.Y., Lodge No. 2158; Tommy Goodelle; and Morgan Miehle, sponsored by Wheeling, W.V., Lodge No. 28 all captured Emile Brady awards by posting perfect scores to win the Boys 8-9, Boys 12-13, and Girls 12-13 divisions, respectively.

see Champion, continued on page 4

Emersyn Hess and her mom, Andrea, re-create a picture they took when Emersyn made it to the National Finals in 2022. This time, they added Grandma and Grandpa! Sponsored by Vincennes, Ind., Lodge No. 291, Emersyn finished ninth in Girls 10-11 after winning Girls 8-9 last year.

ELKS HOOP SHOOT HALL OF FAME

Please join us in honoring the 2023 Elks Hoop Shoot Hall of Fame inductees: Competitors Kelly Goble⁺, Kelly Lane Clauss, and Ty Russell Rogers, and Contributors Bernie Watters⁺, Joy Brady, Richard Froeschle⁺, Don Fassnacht⁺, Jim McNitt and Karen McNitt.

Richard Froeschle served as the director of Region 3 for 19 years and was instrumental to opening the program to girls. Froeschle took then-National Director Getty Powell to a girl's high school basketball tournament in Iowa, which got Powell's attention and changed the course of the program forever.

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Champion, continued from page 3

One other division, Girls 10-11, required a shootoff to resolve. All told, there were four shootoffs, with the longest going three rounds of five additional shots.

During that evening's Awards Banquet, keynote speaker Sarah Spain spoke on the grit exhibited by famous athletes—and herself—and encouraged all the Finalists to leave the Windy City with their heads held high.

"As long as you tried your hardest, as long as you put in the work, you can look back and say, 'I did right by myself and my family and my competitors,'" said Spain. "That is truly grit."

Regardless of whether they left the Windy City with a trophy, all 72 of the National Finalists should go home feeling like champions.

The Elks have been unleashing gritty kids through the Hoop Shoot program for more than 50 years. For 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$1.5 million to fund the program. For videos, news from the court, and more information about the Hoop Shoot, visit elks.org/hoopshoot.



Girls 8-9 Champion Cadence Watson, sponsored by Coshocton, Ohio, Lodge No. 376, smiles with Keynote Speaker and ESPN broadcaster Sarah Spain.



SERVICE-MINDED, ELK-BONDED

The Top 20 MVS scholars gathered for the Most Valuable Student Leadership Weekend. These new members of the #ElksFamily bonded over shared experiences and service to the Chicago community.

Roses, buds, thorns: the good, the good things to come, and the challenging. During their final reflections at the 2023 Most Valuable Student Leadership Weekend, many of the Top 20 scholars said that the rose from their weekend was meeting one another and the bud was 19 new friendships and the future to come.

For the first time since 2019, the Top 20 gathered in person to get to know one another, as well as current Elks scholars and alums; interview for the top awards of \$50,000, \$40,000 and \$30,000; and learn about their new #ElksFamily.

The weekend was full of team-building exercises and activities like Tell My Story, which allowed the scholars to learn one another's backgrounds and passions.

Karen Dorantes, sponsored by Salinas, Calif., Lodge No. 614, and Marissa Schirmer, sponsored by Lebanon, Ind., Lodge No. 635, learned they were both twins, while Andrew Shelton, sponsored by Lamar, Mo., Lodge No. 2800, and 2023 top winner Diya Jha, sponsored by Frederick, Md., Lodge No. 684, discovered their shared dedication as second-degree black belts in Taekwondo.

"It's been great to meet students who share a common goal and students who have accomplished so much in their short lives," said Karen.

On Friday, the scholars visited the Elks Veterans Memorial and Headquarters, where they participated in a scavenger hunt designed to teach them about the Order, before volunteering at Cradles to Crayons, a nonprofit organization that provides children living in under-resourced areas with the essential items they need to thrive at home, at school, and at play.

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"He loved this program as much as my dad and Emile [Brady, the second National Director]," says Bart Powell, son of Getty Powell, the first National Director. "He had a boatload of ideas that helped get the program off the ground."

Because of him, Kelly Lane (Clauss) was able to compete and carve out a name for herself in the history of the Hoop Shoot. In 1979, she became the first Hoop Shooter to win back-to-back National Championships. She represented Vincennes, Ind., Lodge No. 291 at the Finals four times.

The 2023 inductees are joining a long line of Hoop Shoot greats: competitors who distinguished themselves in the program or went on to do great things, and contributors who helped them get there. You can view the full Elks Hoop Shoot Hall of Fame online at enf.elks.org/EHOF.

+Denotes award given posthumously

ENF

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Visit enf.elks.org/HBSpring,
and your online donation will
be put to work immediately
in Elks communities!



The scholars learned about the Elks through a scavenger hunt at the Memorial.

Service, continued from page 5

SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

Have you started packing for the Elks National Convention? Don't forget to add the ENF to your schedule and a new or gently used children's book or a new pair of socks to your bag!

Again this year, the ENF is shining a spotlight on service. Drop off the books and socks at the ENF Booth from Saturday to Tuesday for your Lodge to be entered into a raffle to win a bonus Community Investments Program grant. The books

continued on facing page

That night, Shermann "Dilla" Thomas, a Chicago Urban Historian, presented on the city's rich history, which includes the invention of the assembly line and the brownie. The next day, the scholars experienced firsthand some of the city's defining qualities with a trip to the world-famous Cloud Gate—a.k.a The Bean—and a dinner cruise on Lake Michigan.

Although initially unsure, the scholars were coaxed onto the boat's dance floor by 2003 Most Valuable Student top winner and Elk from Provo, Utah, Lodge No. 849, Sean Loosli, who was in Chicago to serve on the interview panel and as a scholar leader. After fulfilling his official duties, Sean connected with the scholars on a personal level, staying up late to supervise and play games as the Top 20 made the most of their time left together before the looming thorn: early-morning flights home.

College—and life—is easier with friends by your side, and now the 2023 Top 20 MVS scholars have not only the 19 new friends they made during the Leadership Weekend, but the whole #ElksFamily behind them.

For 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$2.9 million to fund the Most Valuable Student scholarship program, which includes 500 four-year scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$50,000. For more information about the Most Valuable Student scholarship program, including eligibility and deadlines, visit enf.elks.org/MVS.

Top winner Diya Jha (second from left) developed Let's TALC to fight opioid use in her high school by educating students about the dangers and encouraging them to connect with one another. At the Leadership Weekend, Diya was quick to get the scholars to connect, too, by always encouraging everyone to get together for selfies.



SCHOLARS PUT IN THE WORK

Driven. Enthusiastic. Hard-working. Dedicated. Positive. Innovative. When asked how they would describe themselves, the 2023 Top 20 Most Valuable Student scholars listed many synonyms to reflect the effort they put into their schoolwork and giving back to their communities.

But one word stood out when thinking about how to describe the top winners, who took home \$50,000 scholarships: compassionate.

“The Elks National Foundation has a unique focus on the actions we take, our leadership style, and especially our own behaviors and how we’re impacting others,” says Diya Jha, a top winner. “Elks offer phenomenal opportunities to grow as a student, a leader and a person.”

Sponsored by Frederick, Md., Lodge No. 684, Diya plans to attend Yale University and major in computer science, and she has already started making a huge difference in her community. As a high school senior, she was selected as one of 12 students across the United States to take part in the Bezos Scholars program.

“My school is a Title 1 school where more than 46 percent of the students come from low-income backgrounds,” says Diya. “Drug use is an epidemic in my school.”

So, Diya developed and executed Let’s TALC (Teach, Access, Learn, Choice) to educate students about the dangers of opioid use and encourage them to talk about their experiences and develop other life skills and passions.

“I want my work to continue, so I recruited underclassmen to keep this work sustainable, and I shared with them the funding avenues for future plans,” says Diya. “I am a person who believes in putting in the work to make things better.”

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Pack your bags and your schedules—don’t forget to include the ENF in your Convention plans.

will help improve family literacy, and the socks will go to veterans experiencing homelessness in the Minneapolis area.

That’s not all. On Friday, June 30, the Elks Scholar Advisory Board, made up of current Elks scholars and alumni who advise the ENF on our scholar relations and engagement efforts, will participate in a day of service with local Elks Lodges.

The service doesn’t have to stop there. Attend the ENF’s seminars to learn more about fundraising, the Hoop Shoot, CIP grants, and how you can use the ENF’s resources to make a difference in your community.

For a full breakdown of the ENF’s Convention schedule, visit enf.elks.org/Convention23.

PART OF THE FAMILY

In April, 350 high school seniors received Legacy Awards, a competitive scholarship available to the children and grandchildren of Elks. For most of them, like Jacobi Lafferty, who received a 2023 Legacy Award and took home a Hoop Shoot National Championship in 2017, the Elks have always been part of the family.

“From the height of winning the National Hoop Shoot when I was 11 to the years when I fell short, there have always been Elk friends there to greet me with open arms,” says Jacobi. “I am proud to call myself part of the Elks family.”

See the entire class of 2023 Legacy Awards recipients at enf.elks.org/leg.

For 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation allocated \$1.4 million to fund 350 Legacy Awards scholarships for the children and grandchildren of Elks. For more information, including eligibility and deadlines, visit enf.elks.org/leg.

Agam Igwe (center) was awarded a \$50,000 scholarship to help him attend Stanford University, where a degree in engineering will help him pursue a career in surgical robotics.



Scholars, continued from page 7

That sentiment was shared by many of the Top 20, including the other top winner. Sponsored by Towson, Md., Lodge No. 469, Agam Iheanyi-Igwe has been training as a volunteer firefighter since he was just 9 years old. By third grade, he was lifting 150-pound dummies onto his shoulder during rescue drills.

“After six rigorous years of training, two leading battalion cadences, I graduated at the highest rank,” says Agam. “I didn’t expect the strenuous training, but I persevered, and the leadership skills I acquired molded ambitions of creating more inclusive communities.”

Agam will attend Stanford University and study engineering. His career dreams include working with surgical robotics, so entire surgeries can be performed remotely—just like in Marvel’s *Iron Man*.

“I won’t have to wait until I’m out of college to start making a difference,” says Agam, “and can apply my knowledge to current research, helping others while still in school.”

It is compassion and drive that inspired these changemakers to start building stronger communities while still in high school, but it would take an entire thesaurus to fully describe them. However, one term is a good place to start: #ElksFamily.



Change the way you think about your support at the Feel Good Giving store, which gives you options to support veterans, the Community Investments Program, or help scholars serve!

FEEL GOOD GIVING

Giving to the ENF is something you can feel good about. The scholarships program helps the leaders of tomorrow pursue their educational dreams, the Hoop Shoot unleashes gritty kids, the Community Investments Program empowers Lodges to address the most pressing needs in their communities, and the Elks National Veterans Service Commission works to end veterans homelessness.

The ENF's Feel Good Giving store shows you what the impact of your donation could be. A \$260 gift helps an Elks scholar attend a service trip and serve alongside fellow Elks scholars and Elks. \$500 can provide a veteran

exiting homelessness with dishes, small appliances, home supplies, and more to help turn their house into a home. \$1,000 puts five Elks in the field to volunteer more than 26 hours through a Community Investments Program grant project.

If you'd like to connect your support to the work we do in a more tangible way, go shopping in our Feel Good Giving store today. Pick a program, find a gift amount that works for you, and feel better about your giving.

Visit enf.elks.org/FeelGoodGiving to learn more.

ASK THE ENF...

Q My Lodge has a large-scale project in mind to make a significant and meaningful difference in our community. How would I apply for an Impact Grant for my Lodge to do this project?

—*Imagining the Impact*

A Hello Imagining,
Thanks for the Impact Grant interest!

The \$10,000 Impact Grant is competitive, and the application process requires two steps. First, the Lodge must complete an Impact Intent questionnaire explaining what the project is, who your Lodge will serve, and why your Lodge is ready for an Impact Grant. Following a review period, we will select Lodges to move on to the full application phase.

Impact Intents are open until August 15. They cannot be edited once they are submitted, so email your draft to the CIP office at LodgeGrants@elks.org for feedback!

Read more about the Impact Grant and submit an Intent at enf.elks.org/ImpactGrants.

Have a question for the ENF? Email us at enf@elks.org.

FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

We salute the following members of the 2022-23 Foundation Fellowship who contributed \$1,000 or more to the Foundation from April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023. To learn more about the Foundation Fellowship and to view the benefits for each level, visit enf.elks.org/fellowship.

(+ Denotes deceased member; ^ Denotes ENF Trustee; > Denotes John F. Malley Society;
* Denotes Fidelity Club; # Denotes Loyalty Club; < Denotes Named Scholarship donor)

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