



## Harvest of Honors: Allentown Fair Spotlights Agricultural Achievement

### For Immediate Release

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**Allentown, Pa.** — The Lehigh County Agricultural Society's (Society) mission is rewarding the achievements of farmers, gardeners and homemakers annually at The Great Allentown Fair. Agricultural Recognition Night honors these individuals, and this year took place on Thursday, September 3 on the fair's Centennial Stage inside Agri~Plex and hosted by the Society's Second Vice President John Cathers Jr. Beyond recognizing this year's award recipients, the evening also underscored the vital role that youth play in agriculture. From 4-H and FFA members to young exhibitors showing livestock and crops, the next generation is essential to carrying forward traditions, embracing innovation, and ensuring a strong future for farming in Lehigh County and beyond.

The Great Allentown Fair Foundation presented a \$1,500 scholarship to Moravian Academy graduate, Zari Whyld-Thomas.

The \$2,000 Greenawald Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Daniel Boone High School graduate, Karina Davidheiser.

Barbara Bigelow awarded the second half of the Leon Peters Memorial \$2,500 scholarship to Kutztown Area High School graduate, Phoebe Stutzman.

The Great Allentown Fair Foundation presented two \$1000 scholarships to Lehigh Christian Academy graduate, Levi Benjamin Lazarus and Octorara Area High School graduate, Kennason Taylor Ware.

Each year the Lehigh County Farm Bureau presents an award for Outstanding Service to Lehigh County Agriculture. A plaque was presented to the Geiger Family of Schnecksville. The Geiger's exemplify the very essence of dedication to agriculture and community; their tireless efforts and exemplary service make her deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

The Society awarded four \$200 scholarships for students in the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the 4-H programs. These students were chosen by the department superintendents for leadership, outstanding participation in their respective programs, along with fair involvement. The winners in 4-H were Parker Haydt of Walnutport and Samuel Paul Lazarus of Lehigh County. Phoebe Stutzman and Katelyn Berger, both of Kutztown, were awarded the FFA scholarships.

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**Add 1**

The Richard Miller Award is presented in memory of Miller, a longstanding director on the Society board and one-time secretary of the Society. Two \$250 scholarships are awarded to an FFA and 4-H member who have excelled in their programs and achieved high academic standards in school. The two scholarship winners were Levi Benjamin Lazarus of Lehigh County in 4-H and Faith Smith of New Tripoli in FFA.

The 2026 Apron Contest, sponsored by Yocco's and the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs, is judged on appearance, creativity, workmanship, design and color. The winning apron will advance to the Pennsylvania Farm Show in January 2027, where it will represent The Great Allentown Fair. Yocco's presented the contest winner with a \$100 award. Sherry Rich of Northampton was named the winner of the 2026 Apron Contest.

The Ben Lazarus Memorial Award is presented to a current or former 4-H member, 17-23 years old, who has exhibited at the fair. The award winner for the 2026 Ben Lazarus Memorial Award was Samuel Paul Lazarus of Lehigh County.

The Mae Rutz Award is given each year in memory of Rutz who gave many years of her time to the fair. Rutz was the first women director on the Society's board. Each year the award is given in a different department in the fair's competitive exhibit area. This year's winner was Joseph Veshinsky of Catasauqua for his house plants.

The Raymond L. Hoffman Youth Award is presented to an outstanding entry in the youth category. The winner must be younger than 19 years old and have been awarded the "Best of Show" rosette chosen from all categories that include needlework, crafts, woodwork, baked products, flowers, arts and related items. The \$250 award was presented to Aurora Landis of Allentown.

The son of June Stas gives two \$250 awards annually to participants winning the supreme champion award in the baking division and to the supreme champion winner in canned, dried or spreads division. The June M. Stas Supreme Baking Award was given to Lorrie A. Rauch of New Tripoli. The June M. Stas Supreme Preserved Product Award was given to William McQuilken of New Tripoli.

The daughters of Amy A. Golden presented the Amy A. Golden Memorial Award. This award was given to the outstanding youth exhibitor in the area of needlework, handcrafts and sewing. The winner of the \$100 award was Laura Dreabit of Allentown.

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The newly crowned Allentown Fair Queen, Brinley Hess of Alburtis was presented half her scholarship from the Lehigh-Northampton Pomona Grange #68. At the end of her yearlong reign as The Great Allentown Fair Queen, Wisser will receive the remaining balance of her scholarship for a total of \$1,500.

Each year, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture presents the Friend of the Fair Award to an individual or group who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication to the success of their fair. The 2026 Friend of the Fair Award was presented to longtime sign designer and decorator Steve Heiland of Schnecksville. For more than four decades, Heiland has been an integral part of The Great Allentown Fair. He first began his involvement by creating carnival and general Fair signage before eventually gravitating to the Agri~Plex, where he has taken on all its sign work. Heiland has also designed and constructed the themed entryway into Harris Hall, helping bring each year's Fair theme to life. His creativity, craftsmanship and decades of dedication have made him an important part of the Fair's visual identity and continued success.

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**Photo Caption:** Newly crowned 2026 Great Allentown Fair Queen Brinley Hess beams with pride as she receives the first installment of her \$1,500 scholarship from Lenny Heim of Pomona Grange #68.