

**(Grandview WA,)** Fred E. Hayes Post 57 of The American Legion in Grandview presented multiple awards to students, groups and schools as the 2022-23 school year came to a close.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, Thompson Elementary School was presented with a plaque honoring their status as the Top School Donor in the Penny-a-Day campaign earlier this spring. The award was accepted by Principal Julie Wysong during the 5<sup>th</sup> grade awards assembly.

At the Grandview High School Senior Awards Assembly on June 7<sup>th</sup>, certificates of appreciation were presented to the ASB Leadership Team, DECA and Hounds Have Heart at Grandview High School for the donation of nearly \$3,000 in food stuffs for the Yakima County Veterans Pantry. Grandview High School has been a major contributor of food to the pantry, which serves homeless and very low income veterans in the county and the donations always seem to come at a time of dire need.

Scholar medals were awarded to the top three Grandview High School athlete scholars for the academic year. They were Natalee Trevino, bronze, Julian Garza, silver, and Jazmine Richey, gold.

Scholar medals were also presented to the top three vocational scholars. Accepting the medals, named after Robert 'Doug' Hilmoe who campaigned for this award at its inception, were Lilly Kassinger, bronze, Cole Judkins, silver, and Andres De Robles, gold.

The major award presented by the Post is The American Legion School Award. This is a National Award presented by local Posts to a graduating boy and girl in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The award requires a nomination addressing six specific criteria: courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, service and scholarship. The award is recognized by colleges and employers nationwide. It is made even more special locally because Grandview is one of a mere handful of communities where the award is even offered and presented, especially in multiple schools. "We are not aware of any other Post in most of Eastern Washington that conducts this program at the scale we do," said Nik Schultz, Vice Commander for the local Post. The Post also offers the program for seniors in Mabton, Prosser, and Bickleton but received no nominations from those schools this year. However, two students who had been Bickleton students until their senior year but transferred to Valley schools for advanced classes were named by the local Post.

Recipients of the medallion award at Grandview High School were Jazmine Richey and Cole Judkins. Maleah Jones, formerly of Bickleton High School but completing her senior year at Grandview, also received the award, since she would have been the Bickleton girl nominee this year.

Although not a school normally covered by the Grandview Post, one Sunnyside High School senior was nominated for the award by Post members. Luke Binfet of Grandview, who was formerly at Bickleton High School and would have been their boy nominee this year, was

presented with the award at the scholarship awards ceremony on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Binfet is an Eagle Scout with Grandview's Scouts BSA Troop 6643 and has been accepted to attend the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in King's Point, New York. "He is without a doubt, a living example of each of the six nominating criteria," said a nominator.

Unfortunately, no nominations were received from Grandview Middle School for graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade students this year.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, two students were named for the award at Thompson School. Their recipients were Herman Martinez Gonzalez and Kimberly Ramos Ramirez.

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, McClure School recipients were Katalina Rodriguez and Juan Manuel Montejano III for the medallion award. Honorable Mention certificates were presented to Skylar Byam, Kassidy Folden, Alexander Licea and Salvador Vergara.

"Smith School again took the program very seriously this year with 14 nominations received," said John Myers, one the members of the selection committee. "We had an extremely difficult time choosing the award winners. They were all very good." At the school's June 12<sup>th</sup> Awards Assembly, the medallion recipients were Frankie Estrada and Ashley Shephard. Honorable Mention certificates were presented to Jaycob Cardenas, Kendra Fajardo, Yahir Verdugo Lopez, Mia Atwood-Martinez, Nathan Mendoza, Noah Mendoza, Davian Orozco, Magdalena Pizano, Giselle Gomez Renteria, Emiliano Munguia Sanchez, Samantha Vaquera and Janet Ramos Villanueva.

Because of the serious effort Smith School made in the nomination process and presenting well-qualified nominees, the Post presented a certificate of appreciation to the faculty and staff.

"We appreciate each of the school's faculty and staff that took the time to make nominations," said Post Commander Dudley Brown. "Our process is not just submitting a name, but taking the time to thoughtfully address each of the six specific criteria that must be completed to make the nomination. We know it is a burden, but good students deserve a chance at this prestigious award and we take this process very seriously," he added.