

RWJF Recognizes Sports Leaders Building a Culture of Health

PRINCETON, N.J.— Ten organizations have been selected as 2022 winners of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Sports Award. The winners will receive a \$30,000 cash prize and be honored virtually on June 8.

Since 2015, this award has recognized professional sports teams, athletes, coaches, and community-based organizations that use sports to catalyze and sustain changes to make communities healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. RWJF lifts up organizations that bring a deep understanding of community needs and acknowledge the power of sports to connect us and make us healthier, no matter our race, gender, abilities, or economic background. This award program will be coming to a close this year.

“We celebrate and honor all of the organizations that have been winners and finalists over the history of our award program recognizing the power of sports to improve health equity,” said Dr. Richard Besser, president and CEO of RWJF. “We take pride in the tremendous growth, accomplishments, and contributions to health made through sports.”

2022 winners:

[America SCORES](#) provides free after-school and summer programs that build teams and support healthy whole child development through a unique combination of soccer, poetry, and service learning.

"America SCORES is honored to receive The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award! Like RWJF, we have a longstanding commitment to making communities healthier. On behalf of our more than 11,000 poet-athletes across 11 cities, America SCORES thanks you for supporting our efforts to build healthy habits through soccer, inspire expression through poetry, and spark community change through civic action." – *Icy Jones, Executive Director*

[Camp Shriver at UMass Boston](#) is a free, inclusive summer camp for children with and without disabilities so that all children can play, learn, and interact in meaningful ways with their peers.

“Camp Shriver at UMass Boston is privileged to stand with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in highlighting the importance of inclusion of children and youth of all abilities in sports and recreational activities. At Camp Shriver, uniquely serving a population where half of our participants have a disability, all children learn and play as equals. With this award, Camp Shriver will continue to demonstrate the importance of inclusion, both through expanding our camp and disseminating inclusive standards nationally.” – *Gary Siperstein, founder and director of the Center for Social Development and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston*

[Downtown Boxing Gym](#) is a free after-school academic and athletic program that provides education, athletics, mentorship and intervention, empowering Detroit students to be positive and productive members of society.

"The Downtown Boxing Gym is honored to receive the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award for our life-changing work with Detroit students. Our free academic and athletic program breaks down barriers, provides vital resources, and creates a safe space for students to discover the power of who they are. Sports play a critical role in our work. The 'hour of play' we spend with our students builds trust, sparks deeper conversations, and helps us train kids for life." – *Khali Sweeney, Founder and CEO*

[Harlem Lacrosse](#) provides opportunities, relationships, and experiences that activate the skills and traits to put youth on a path to success as students, athletes, and citizens.

"Harlem Lacrosse is honored to receive the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sports award alongside so many other incredible organizations. Harlem Lacrosse supports students by placing program directors in schools every day and integrating sports-based youth development with academic intervention. We believe that our participants deserve access to the best possible academic, enrichment and athletic experiences as a matter of equity and are so grateful to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for helping us provide healthy, empowering opportunities to more students with this award." – *Mike Levin, CEO*

[New Heights](#) uses basketball as a “hook” to engage youth, help them access high quality educational opportunities, and instill in them the values and life skills that will prepare them for success in life beyond sports.

“On behalf of our Board, staff and especially our student-athletes, thank you to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for recognizing the important work we do at New Heights to help young people develop the academic and athletic skills to support physical and mental health throughout their lives. We are deeply honored to receive the RWJF Sports Award, which comes at a critical time as we expand our programs and our organization to ultimately reach thousands of additional youth and families in Brooklyn and throughout New York City.” – *Ted Smith, Executive Director*

[Skate Like a Girl](#) empowers skaters, especially young women and/or trans people, to grow into strong, confident leaders who promote and implement social equity.

"It is a tremendous honor for Skate Like a Girl to receive this award for our work creating a more inclusive community. As a skateboarding organization, we have always dreamed of what we do being recognized as a sport and as something that plays a role in keeping young people active and thriving." – *Kristin Ebeling, Executive Director*

[Snider Hockey](#) is a nationally acclaimed non-profit that uses the sport of hockey to educate and empower under-resourced youth of Philadelphia to prosper in the game of life.

“Snider Hockey is thrilled and honored to be chosen for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award in recognition of our mission of building lives and uniting communities. We have long recognized the impact that sports—particularly ice hockey!--can have on a young person’s life, and we thank RWJF for their shared commitment of removing barriers to health equity for under-resourced youth.” – *Scott Tharp, President/CEO*

[Students Run Philly Style](#) transforms students’ lives through running and mentorship, supporting Philadelphia youth facing high levels of adversity.

“Students Run Philly Style is incredibly honored to now be a recipient of the RWJF Sports Award. This honor is a wonderful validation of the organization’s commitment to building the confidence, resilience and community to best support young people in Philadelphia. We are thrilled to be recognized as part of this amazing group of organizations and look forward to creating healthier and more equitable spaces within which youth can thrive.” - *Andy Kucer, Executive Director*

[Team Prime Time](#)’s program, Prime Time Games, is a full-inclusion, peer-mentor sports program wherein students coach and play alongside children with developmental disabilities.

“We at Team Prime Time are incredibly honored to receive the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award for our full inclusion, interscholastic sports program, the Prime Time Games(r). We believe that uniting kids of all abilities and backgrounds through a shared love of sport can play a vital role in building healthier, more inclusive communities that benefit from each individual's unique strengths. Thank you to the RWJF foundation for celebrating what's possible through the power of sport.” – *Peter Straus, Founder and Executive Director*

[Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation](#) is empowering the lives of young people from underserved communities by improving physical and emotional health through the sport of gymnastics.

“It is such an honor to be awarded the Robert Wood Johnson Sports Award for the work that the Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation has been providing to underserved youth. It has been wonderful to connect with many organizations that share the same passion and desire to help youth become more healthy through sports. I also want to thank the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for gathering us all together, helping us through their studies and data, and making it a community effort in the work that we do.” – *Wendy Hilliard, Founder/CEO*

To learn more about the RWJF Sports Award, and see past winners, visit www.rwjf.org/sportsaward.

ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION SPORTS AWARD

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award honors the innovative and collaborative efforts of individuals, organizations and teams that are making their communities healthier through sport. For more information on the award, visit www.rwjf.org/sportsaward.

ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to improving health and health equity in the United States. In partnership with others, we are working to develop a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they have.