

# Waste Management's Generous Donation to The Knights' Order

By Krista Campbell

PEN ARGYL - The Knights' Order, the Character Education program at Pen Argyl High School is responsible for service projects throughout the school and community. The Knights' Order focuses on improving school climate, culture, and tolerance through hosting events and activities meant to showcase integrity, fortitude, diversity, and kindness.

Waste Management recognized all of the good we were doing for our school and made a 4-year commitment of giving us \$20,000 a year to help support our efforts. This month we received our final check of \$20,000 that we look forward to using in all of our future projects.

So far Character Education has used the money we received to pay for service learning projects, which give teachers the opportunity to help students better their education outside of the classroom by making real-world connections. We are happy to pay for any supplies or funds they need to help their students give back to their community. We were also able to pay for supplies for our trip to the Plainfield Elementary School where we helped out with their Fall Carnival and talked to the younger generations of Pen Argyl School District about the Code of the Green Knights.

The Knights' Order was also able to use the donation we received from Waste Management to help kids with cancer by donating \$150 to Mini-Thon and paying for a bus so the leadership team could attend a Mini-Thon Conference in Hershey. We were also able to provide FBLA with funds to cover their trip to the state competition to Hershey because they did not have enough funds to send all of the students who qualified.

With our money we decided to donate \$5,000 to a very important organization in our community, Families First. Families First is an organization that helps many families in our community that are in need.

We enjoy working with them for Stuff the Bus, the Christmas toy drive that they host, and any other fundraisers or projects they organize. We are very excited to make such a difference in our community by donating to this worthy cause. Character Education is very grateful for the money we received from Waste Management because with it we are able to help our school by spreading our message and making a positive impact on students' lives everyday. We are looking forward to continuing to do great things for our school and community with the generosity of Waste Management.

## The Knights' Order Recognition as a National School of Character

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In 2022, PAHS was named a State School of Character. Since then we have been continuing our character journey and are proud to announce that we have just received the distinction of National School of Character. Character.org, a national advocate and leader for character development in schools and communities, today certified 71 schools as National Schools of Character.

Pen Argyl was the only school in Pennsylvania to receive this honor, and one of only 9 high schools nationwide. "We are pleased to announce and celebrate the schools that have earned this national recognition," said Dr. Arthur Schwartz, President of Character.org. "Each of these schools has put in place a comprehensive approach to help students understand, care about, and consistently practice the character strengths that will help them flourish in school, in relationships, in the workplace, and as citizens." Since its inception, the National Schools of Character program has impacted over three million students, staff, parents, and community members.

The schools that apply must meet the rigorous standards articulated in Character.org's 11 Principles Framework for Schools: A Guide to Cultivating a Culture of Character. Each school is assessed by a team of trained evaluators. "There is an ethic of care at these schools," adds Lori Soifer, who directs the Schools of Character program. "Working together with students, parents and community members, these schools are creating stronger communities focused on character." There was a lot of work that went into this process, and we could not have done it without the support of students, faculty & staff, parents, and the community. It was wonderful to see everyone come together to help us achieve our goals. We are "Pen Argyl Proud" today!



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