The 2026 ASPIRE Awards Honors 27 Recipients in its 30th Anniversary Year in Henry County this Past Weekend

Guest Speaker and Entrepreneur Tasha Schuh Spoke to a Packed House at the ASPIRE Awards in Locust Grove This Year

Atlanta, September 28, 2026– The American Association of Adapted Sports Programs, Inc. (AAASP) is proud to announce the **2026 ASPIRE Awards Recipients**, representing 23 categories that highlight outstanding contributions in support of student athletes with qualifying disabilities. The **A**dapted **S**ports **P**rograms **i**n **R**ecreation and **E**ducation (**ASPIRE**) **Awards** recognize the exemplary efforts of individuals and organizations that have been instrumental in advancing AAASP's mission to expand access to adapted sports programming nationwide.

The Eighth Annual ASPIRE Awards Celebration took place on Sunday, September 27th at Locust Grove Event Center in Locust Grove, Georgia. More than 79 individuals and organizations were nominated in 23 categories, with 27 receiving awards last night. Below please find a list of recipients for 2026:

2026 ASPIRE AWARD RECIPIENTS

ADAPTED TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Ben Vondrak *Wesleyan School*

COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD – JV

Ryan Johnson *Clarke Classic City Dawgs*

COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD – VARSITY

Jaqueline Randall *Houston County Sharks*

COMMUNITY-BASED AWARD

Adaptive Sports Northwest (ASNW) *Portland, OR*

EDUCATION-BASED AWARD

Muscogee County School District *Muscogee Lions*

ELI WOLFF ADVOCACY AWARD

Tanya Anderson *Georgia High School Association*

Dr. Alan Long *BSN Sports*

GAIL HENDRICK CHAMPION OF SUPPORT AWARD

Virginia and Curtis Tabron *Houston County Sharks*

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR ATHLETE AWARD

Blakelea Speer *West Georgia Wolverines*

LESLIE SWEATMAN OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ted Childs *AAASP Official*

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MEDIA HERO AWARD

GPB Sports *Atlanta, GA*

MOST IMPROVED JV ATHLETE

Halyn Duncan *Clarke Classic City Dawgs*

MOST IMPROVED VARSITY ATHLETE

Ruby Stachowski *Houston County Sharks*

THE DR. RALPH SWEARNGIN SPIRIT OF AAASP SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Jaden Screen **Houston County Sharks**

VAUGHN STORMS FOUNDERS AWARD

DeKalb County School District *Stone Mountain, GA*

Kyle Pease Foundation *Atlanta, Georgia*

VARSITY SCHOLAR ATHLETE

Jenna Proctor *Calhoun High School*

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD – JV

Ja'Corian Carter *Georgia Storm*

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD – VARSITY

Anthony Cuti *Houston County Sharks*

WHEELCHAIR FOOTBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD – JV

Paul Hart *Muscogee Lions*

William Hannah *Georgia Storm*

WHEELCHAIR FOOTBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD – VARSITY

Gary Woodruff *Clayton Eagles*

WHEELCHAIR HANDBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD - JV

Lane Rogers *Clarke Classic City Dawgs*

WHEELCHAIR HANDBALL ATHLETE OF THE AWARD -VARSITY

AJ Burns *Peach County Rolling Trojans*

HEART AND HUSTLE AWARD

Piper Barronton *Houston County Sharks*

Jeremiah Rhodes *Peach County Rolling Trojans*

ADAPTED SPORTS LEAGUE MVP

Laila Kindness *Houston County Sharks*

Highlights of the ASPIRE Awards event, emceed by actor, writer and television personality **Patrick Cusick**, featured the **AAASP 30th Anniversary Walk** – a mini walk-through exhibit highlighting three decades of adapted sports history, an inspirational presentation and performance from **Tasha Schuh**, Speaker, Author, and Resilience Coach, as well as dinner and the awards ceremony, honoring 79 nominees across Georgia and the nation.

Thank you to the following 2026 AAASP ASPIRE Awards Sponsors: **Northside Hospital - Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**, **Henry County Department of Parks and Recreation**, and **Rally Recognition**. AAASP would also like to thank the following partners: the Georgia Department of Education, the State of Georgia, the Georgia High School Association (GHSA), National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), Bridgestone Americas and the AAASP Board of Directors.

Please visit: https://adaptedsports.org/2026-aspire-awards/ for more information on this year's event.

The American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing students with physical and other qualifying disabilities the opportunity to participate in competitive, education-based athletics. Founded in Georgia following the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, AAASP has developed a comprehensive model for adapted sports that includes standardized rules, seasons, training and competition. Through its partnership with the Georgia High School Association (GHSA), AAASP provides opportunities for student-athletes across Georgia to participate in adapted sports alongside their peers. For more information, visit http://adaptedsports.org or join our conversations on Facebook, Instagram or X at: @AdaptedSports.

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