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Houston County Sharks Supporters Presented ASPIRE Awards



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Several Houston County Sharks supporters recently received awards from the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP). The Adapted Sports Programs in Recreation and Education (ASPIRE) Awards recognize individuals who serve as role models and advocates for adapted sports. Adapted sports programs allow students with physical disabilities to reap the physical, social, emotional, and academic benefits of competitive athletics resulting in personal and social empowerment.

Forty-three nominees across the United States were recognized at the 2023 Aspire Awards held earlier this year. Sharks' nominees were named the winner in three categories.

Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Past President of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL), accepted the Eli Wolff Award for Advocacy for her role in promoting adapted sports through the GAEL organization.

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Anthony Cuti, a 10th grade student from Houston County High School, received the Male Scholar Athlete of the Year Award. This award is presented to a male athlete who showed leadership not only on the court, but also in the classroom. He currently maintains a 4.0 GPA while participating in 4 sports: wrestling, Sharks Basketball, Sharks Handball, and Sharks Football.

Michael Leverett, a Sharks supporter from Disability Connections, received the Media Hero Award for providing conscientious coverage and visibility to AAASP's sports leagues.

Other Houston County Sharks and supporters who were nominated included:

- Jeremy Downing, Coach of the Year – Varsity
- Stephen Robertson, Coach of the Year – Varsity
- Bryan Watts, Coach of the Year – Varsity
- Benito Alejandro, Gail Hendrick Award for Volunteerism
- Bobby Ryals, Gail Hendrick Award for Volunteerism
- Ca'ron Harris, Power Chair Athlete of the Year
- Josh Cruz, Male Athlete of the Year
- Laila Kindness, Female Athlete of the Year
- Ashlyn Stevens, Female Scholar Athlete of the Year

The AAASP represents a standardized approach to interscholastic sports programming for students with physical disabilities. Learn more at www.adaptedsports.org. For more information about the Sharks or Houston County's winners, please contact Melanie Duncan at melanie.duncan@hcbe.net.

Pictured above (left to right): Dr. Zabrina Cannady and Buddy Costley, Executive Director of GAEL; Anthony Cuti with Jeremy Downing, Sharks Coach and teacher at C.B. Watson Primary School. Not pictured: Michael Leverett.

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