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BSSG Announces Character Counts! Scholarship Winners

Billings, MT – The Big Sky State Games is happy to announce: Ella Breen of Laurel High School, Kaiya Graves of Laurel High School, Mya Maack of Laurel High School, Tucker Rice of Billings Skyview High School, and Teylor Ronish of Billings Senior High School as the recipients of the 2022 Big Sky State Games Character Counts! Scholarship. The \$500 scholarship winners will be recognized at the 37th Annual Big Sky State Games Opening Ceremonies event Friday, July 15.

This is the third year a fifth scholarship was added to be awarded in memory of BSSG Softball Commissioner, Wayne Ware. The winners were selected based on their character, community involvement, and participation in sports. Character Counts! promotes sportsmanship fostering good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling, the “Six Pillars of Character”: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship

2021-2022 high school juniors were eligible to apply for the scholarship. Selecting students who are finishing their junior year in high school ensures that the winners may be observed as role models during their senior year. Congratulations, again, to this year’s recipients.

Ella Breen, an 11-year participant of the Big Sky State Games, has found great success on the soccer field as well as in the classroom. She has a 4.2 GPA and has been on Honor Roll for three years. She earned the AAA (Athletics, Academics and Attitude) Award for soccer and Academic All-State for three years. Highlighting her musical talents, Breen also received an award for being a top 10 musician in symphonic band. She works at Caring Hands Veterinary Clinic.

Kaiya Graves competed in both discus and shotput in the State Games for five years. Graves is Laurel High School’s student council secretary and has lettered in student council for three years. She has earned the AAA Award three years in a row, Academic All-State honors six times, the

Principal's Leadership Award in 2019, and was this year's Science Olympiad: Division C State Champion. She holds a 4.36 GPA. Graves has earned a combined total of six varsity letters in track and field, volleyball and basketball. She has officiated middle school athletics for four years and has extensive volunteer experience.

Mya Maack has participated in Big Sky State Games 3v3 soccer for nine years, and track and field for two years. Her athletic accomplishments include receiving Academic All-State honors for multiple sports for three years, receiving All-State honors for soccer for three years, and being named her soccer team's Offensive MVP two years in a row. Maack is also a member of National Honor Society and holds a 4.27 GPA. She has worked at The Snow Shack for two years in customer relations and social media management.

Tucker Rice has participated in numerous Big Sky State Games sports since 2016, including swimming, open water swimming, youth triathlon and team triathlon. Earning a 4.53 GPA at Skyview High School, Rice received Academic All-State honors in swimming and was inducted into National Honors Society. He worked as an intern at High Plains Architects last summer.

Taylor Ronish has participated in a variety of Big Sky State Games since 2013, including soccer, basketball and cornhole. He received the American Legion Award in addition to two Principal Awards. Ronish is a member of National Honor Society and received Academic All-State honors. He has a cumulative GPA of 4.5. Ronish works as a soccer coach for the Billings United kid's camp, Timber's Youth League and Real Billings.

The Character Counts! Scholarship is sponsored by Mountain Alarm Fire & Security. Major sponsors of the Big Sky State Games are Kampgrounds of America, First Interstate Bank, and BlueCross BlueShield of Montana. Wendy's sponsors Opening Ceremonies. For more information, go to bigskygames.org or call (406) 254-7426.



Ella Breen



Kaiya Graves



Mya Maack



Tucker Rice



Teylor Ronish

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