

From: The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes Official Website [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org)

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## Area student wins Prize for Young Heroes

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To curb hunger in areas of Philadelphia, Jonathan Leung worked with other students to donate excess food from his school's cafeteria.

Leung graduated this spring from the Haverford School, where he began a student-run organization called "Helping Hunger." He said he felt compelled to act when he learned that the cafeteria threw away large amounts of food each day.

"It's stupid to throw away food when people are starving," said Leung, now a University of Pennsylvania freshman.

For his work with Helping Hunger, Leung recently won the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. His prize included a scholarship.

In putting Helping Hunger together, Leung organized several students who wanted to help with the food donations. Together, they wrote a mission statement.

"We didn't know what we were doing at the time," Leung said.

Leung went to Philabundance, the largest hunger-relief group in the Philadelphia area. Philabundance, though, required at least 300 pounds of food per donation for pickup, more than Leung was offering.

So Philabundance suggested a partnership with Life Center, a homeless shelter in Philadelphia with roughly 300 residents. After forming the partnership, Leung organized a group of student volunteers to drive to the center with daily food donations.

Soon after, Helping Hunger expanded to local businesses, as Leung and other students asked restaurants and bakeries in their area for leftover food.

In his senior year, Leung submitted an application for the Barron Prize with the hope of receiving a scholarship, and learned of his achievement several months later.

"I was really excited when I got the call," he said. "Really happy."



Jonathan Leung, a Penn freshman and Haverford School graduate, has won a Barron Prize for Young Heroes for his role in founding Helping Hunger.

DAVID M WARREN / Staff Photographer

The children's author T. A. Barron founded the prize 10 years ago, beginning with his home state of Colorado before spreading the contest nationwide. He named the prize after his mother, Gloria, who he said was a hero in his life.

"For 20 years, I have been writing children's books that feature heroic young people," T. A. Barron said. "And I realized that kids today don't understand their own power to make a difference. I founded this prize to turn the spotlight on amazing kids throughout the country."

The Barron Prize receives nominations annually from hundreds of students, recognizes 25, and awards scholarships to 15. Leung was the only 2009 scholarship recipient from Pennsylvania.

"Jonathan is one of our most outstanding winners," Barron said. "He has gone from a small beginning to something that has made a huge impact."

Each scholarship is for \$2,500. Barron funds the prize himself from a portion of his book sales.

Leung said he hoped to start a branch of Helping Hunger at Penn and would become once more involved with the group after he finished midterms.

After graduating from Haverford, Leung handed down that operation to a friend. Helping Hunger also exists at Episcopal Academy, where another friend of Leung's has created a branch.