



Barron Prize Announces 2025 Winners

Boulder, CO, September 16, 2025 – The **Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes**, an award that celebrates inspiring, public-spirited young people, is thrilled to announce its 2025 winners.

Established in 2001 by author T. A. Barron, the Barron Prize annually honors 25 outstanding young leaders ages 8 to 18 who have made a significant positive difference to people and the environment. Fifteen top winners each receive \$10,000 to support their service work or higher education.

Over the past 25 years, the Barron Prize has honored 625 young heroes from across the U.S. and Canada. They have helped the hungry and the homeless, invented life-saving technologies, protected our oceans and endangered species, and addressed climate change, among myriad other initiatives. They have raised nearly \$32 million for their causes and have inspired countless people by their example.

The 2025 winners are:

Aadi Kulkarni, age 17, of New Hampshire, who founded TechPals to teach digital skills to senior citizens while fostering intergenerational connections. His team of youth volunteers has helped more than 5,000 seniors learn to text, use FaceTime, and recognize scams, among other digital skills.

Alaina Zhang, age 17, of Rhode Island, who created Harvesting Change to explore native seaweed's potential as an eco-friendly and affordable method to absorb excess nitrogen along Rhode Island's coast, where nitrogen overload causes algal blooms that deplete oxygen and threaten marine life.

Anisha Dhoot, age 16, of Oregon, whose Smart Carbon Recycling innovation supports sustainable agriculture and helps mitigate climate change by combining carbon sequestration, seaweed-based fertilizer, biochar, and an AI-based machine learning model that aids crop selection.

April Surac, age 17, of Florida, who founded NeuraSensa to engineer interactive textile art installations that integrate layered fabrics, embedded sensors, and responsive elements to support neurodivergent individuals and those with sensory processing differences.

Asa Miller, age 18, of New York, who created ¡Viva el Vivero! (Long Live the Nursery!), an initiative that provides training, manpower, record keeping, and supplies to help communities in Cuba restore their threatened coral reefs.

Carter Medved, age 18, of New York, who created three youth-led sustainability initiatives -- CrushCarbon, EnviroVols, and WattSherpa -- to help local residents take action to reduce emissions,

volunteer together, and better understand climate solutions.

Cynthia Zhang, age 17, of New York, who founded Monarchs Matter to combat biodiversity loss and climate change by sharing the wonder of the monarch butterfly. She supports youth in raising, tagging, and releasing monarchs and has created 15 monarch waystations across 34 acres.

Ethan Hua, age 17, of California, who founded the H.O.P.E. (Help Our Planet Earth) school uniform recycling program to reduce landfill waste, ease families' financial burdens, and promote sustainability. His program has collected and redistributed over 9,500 uniforms, saving families an estimated \$135,000 in clothing costs.

Gia Providente, age 8, of New York, who is helping protect endangered diamondback terrapin turtles on the South Shore of Long Island by designing awareness signs and working with her Town Board to install them in local bayfront parks.

Matthew Vila, age 16, of Florida, who founded Harmony Hugs to lead a team of passionate student musicians in providing free weekly instrumental music lessons to 70 local youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Nicolina Pappas, age 14, of Illinois, who founded Nicolina's Turtle Co. to reduce plastic use and encourage conservation. Her Skip the Plastic campaign supports communities across Illinois and Iowa in reducing their reliance on single-use plastics.

Srihan Sankepalle, age 15, of Michigan, who has developed a nontoxic, scalable system to remove microplastics from rivers, lakes, and coastlines that costs 90% less than commercial systems and requires no power supply beyond UV light.

Vick and William Tan, ages 16 and 14, of Minnesota, who co-founded Fish Hut to support mental health in youth by promoting time outdoors and connection through fishing. Their nonprofit hosts free fishing events and places Fish Hut boxes of loaner fishing equipment in underserved communities across numerous states.

Vivian Liu, age 16, of Texas, who founded Origami For Good, a global nonprofit that has inspired more than 7,000 volunteers to create over 825,000 pieces of origami for people in hospitals, nursing homes, and children's centers around the world.

Zinia Khattar, age 17, of California, who has designed a novel gene-set profiling algorithm to explore specific cellular mechanisms that can be regulated to alleviate mitochondrial dysfunction -- the root of many diseases.

www.barronprize.org