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CONTACT:  
Julie Hayes, 484-430-2352  
jhayes@mankogold.com

## 13th ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNERS HONORED at SURPRISE PRESENTATIONS

Region-Wide Search Spearheaded by  
Wawa, 6abc and Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP

### ARCHBISHOP DAMIANO SCHOOL, Westville, NJ



Photo by Mark Garvin

Left to right: Wally the Wawa Goose; Nicole Moshang, partner Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP; Bro. Thomas Osario, Executive Director; Horticultural Teacher Linda McHugh, Joan Tracy, Master Gardener Volunteer; Kate Flynn, Principal; Anthony Desien, Student; Julie Hayes, MGKF Marketing Director; and 6abc Director of Community Affairs, Niki Hawkins.

### PENNS GROVE HIGH SCHOOL, Carneys Point, NJ



Photo by Mark Garvin

Left to right: 6abc Director of Community Affairs, Niki Hawkins; Bruce Katcher, partner, Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP; Penns Grove High School Principal Lory O'Brien; Science teacher Vicki Palaganas; Superintendent Dr. Zenaida Cobian; Board of Education President Vicki Smith; Student Carlos Leon; Wally the Wawa Goose; and Julie Hayes, MGKF Marketing Director.

Philadelphia, PA (April 23, 2018) – Archbishop Damiano School in Westville, NJ and Penns Grove High School in Carneys Point, NJ, were honored with the 2018 Environmental Community Service Award, presented by Wawa, 6abc, and the environmental law firm Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP (MGKF). The goal of the Environmental Community Service Award is to recognize two schools (6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades) for their outstanding programs that enhance and improve the quality of life in their communities as well as raise awareness of environmental concerns. Each school received a \$5,000 honorarium to advance their environmental programs.

The Archbishop Damiano School (ADS) horticultural program exposes about 150 students with developmental disabilities to hands-on learning every year. Horticultural therapy uses gardens and plants to help with physical, developmental and/or emotional healing. The ADS accessible gardens improve sensory experiences and promote hands-on learning with the use of fragrance and herbs, cutting flowers, koi ponds, and wildlife gardens with birdhouses grown from birdhouse gourd seeds. The therapeutic benefits of horticulture for people with physical, developmental, emotional, mental and social challenges have been well documented. In addition to stimulating the senses, garden therapy tends to release stress, alleviate depression, improve creativity, promote positive emotions and improve motor skills.

The ADS accessible gardens also focus on sustainability. They employ a composting and recycling program using recycled K-cups to plant new seeds in addition to a composting program that enriches garden soil using kitchen waste. ADS's organic garden practices are evident in all their composting practices and throughout their program.

The garden also allows the students to connect with community members by growing, harvesting, and preparing nutritious food in school with a focus on sustainability. Students can take home fresh, local, free product in addition to providing vegetables to the local food pantry. This is all achieved while helping students understand environmentally sustainable practices for future generations.

“Archbishop Damiano’s environmental program is incredibly impressive. The program offers students of all ability levels the opportunity to connect with nature and their environment in a hands-on learning setting. The therapeutic benefits of the program for the students in addition to the sustainable, community approach won over the judges,” said MGKF’s Nicole Moshang who presented the award to the school.

Linda McHugh, the horticultural teacher at Archbishop Damiano was thrilled to receive the award along with the faculty, administrators, and students. McHugh said, “I’ve seen how this garden has excited and motivated our students and brought a community of volunteers into our school. The students enjoy seeing the fruits of their labor and I know this award will help us expand our programming.”

The environmental program at Penns Grove High School was formed in response to the presidential memorandum initiated by former President Barack Obama to promote the health of pollinators. They contribute substantially to the U.S. economy and are vital to keeping fruits, nuts and vegetables in our diets. The Penns Grove pollinator garden helps counteract the loss of not only butterflies but honey bees, native bees, birds and bats.

Through Monarch Watch, a citizen project and affiliate program with the Kansas City Biological Survey, 30 students have learned how to grow both the host plant (milkweed) and nectar plants from seed. They rear the monarch caterpillars indoors, hand-feed the emerging adult monarch and tag the discal-cell position on their hind wing to release the butterflies for Monarch Watch ([MonarchWatch.org](http://MonarchWatch.org)) scientists to track their migration to Mexico.

MGKF founding partner Bruce Katcher presented the Penns Grove award. “This project takes on a global issue at a local level. Getting the students involved at their school and in their community can make a positive impact,” he explained.

Penns Grove High School science teacher Vicki Palaganas caught the 6abc PSA about the awards application by chance one morning. "I'm so proud of our program here and how the students have come together to focus on something beyond the walls of this school. Working with the Monarchs takes patience and attention to detail but symbolically also represents change, hope and life for these students."

Since the program's inception, more than 20 schools in the tri-state area have been recognized for their outstanding programs. Last year's winners were Upper Merion Middle School in King of Prussia, PA for their aquaponics program and Newark, DE's Las Américas Aspira Academy outdoor learning environment. In prior years, the winner schools have been The Academy of Notre Dame de Namur in Villanova, PA; Winslow Township Middle School in Atco, NJ; George W. Nebinger School in Philadelphia; The Douglass School in Wilmington, DE; The Pathway School in Norristown, PA; South Philadelphia High School in Philadelphia; Central Bucks High School West in Doylestown, PA; Abington High School in Abington, PA; Williamstown Middle School in Williamstown, NJ, Hatboro-Horsham High School in Horsham, PA, Charles F. Patton Middle School in Kennett Square, PA; Father Judge High School in Philadelphia; Epiphany of Our Lord School in Plymouth Meeting, PA; Abraham Lincoln High School – Horticultural Academy in Philadelphia; Interboro High School in Prospect Park, PA; St. Francis Xavier School in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia; Cedarbrook Middle School in Wyncote; Gateway Regional High School in Woodbury Heights, NJ; W.B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences, Philadelphia.; Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander University of Pennsylvania Partnership School in West Phila; Friends Central Middle School in Merion, PA; and Camden High School in Camden, N.J.

The individuals who judge the programs are all experts in the field of the environment and science. They are representatives from The Franklin Institute, the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Fairmount Water Works, the Stroud Center, Pennsylvania and New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection, and Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control along with someone representing each sponsor -- Wawa, 6abc, and MGKF.

#### **About Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP:**

Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP concentrates its practice in environmental, energy, and land use law and litigation. It represents clients ranging from Fortune 100 corporations to small, privately held enterprises, both in the Mid-Atlantic Region and on a national basis. Their commitment to education is manifested in the lawyers' participation in environmental programs outside the office. *MGKF is honored to be the top-rated law firm, since 2011, in the Top Workplaces surveys by the Philadelphia Inquirer, Daily News and Philly.com.*

#### **About Wawa, Inc.:**

Wawa, Inc., a privately held company, began in 1803 as an iron foundry in New Jersey. Toward the end of the 19th Century, owner George Wood took an interest in dairy farming and the family began a small processing plant in Wawa, PA in 1902. The milk business was a huge success, due to its quality, cleanliness and "certified" process. As home delivery of milk declined in the early 1960's, Grahame Wood, George's grandson, opened the first Wawa Food Market in 1964 as an outlet for dairy products. Today, Wawa is your all day, every day stop for freshly prepared foods, beverages, coffee, fuel services, and surcharge-free ATMs. A chain of more than 780 convenience retail stores (over 550 offering gasoline), Wawa stores are in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and Florida. The stores offer a large fresh food service selection, including Wawa brands such as custom prepared hoagies, freshly-brewed coffee, hot breakfast sandwiches, Specialty Beverages, and an assortment of soups, sides and snacks. In 2016 and 2017 Wawa was recognized in Forbes as one of America's Best Large Employers, a survey-based ranking of employers offering the best

associate experiences and strongest opportunities. In 2017 Wawa was the recipient of a Silver Plate Award in the category of Retail & Specialty Foodservice by the International Foodservice Manufacturers' Association during their 63rd Annual Award Event. Wawa was also designated as a 2017 Best Place to Work for LGBT Equality by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

**About 6abc:**

6abc Action News is the #1 local news brand in the tri-state, and the undisputed news leader for the past 35 years. 6abc.com, the official website of Action News, is also the #1 local TV news website in the market. WPVI-TV is the ABC-owned station serving the Delaware and Lehigh Valleys.

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