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Amy Liriano of Lebanon High School Wins PNA Foundation, AT&T It Can Wait Editorial Contest

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 31, 2022 – Amy Liriano, a freshman at Lebanon High School, is the 2022 winner of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation’s “It Can Wait” editorial contest.

Liriano receives a \$500 cash prize and certificate to be mailed in April. The annual Student Keystone Media Awards luncheon where It Can Wait winners are celebrated – along with other high school and college journalists – is not being held this year due to pandemic uncertainty.

Since 2015, the PNA Foundation, along with PNA and PNA member newspapers, has partnered with AT&T to host an “It Can Wait” editorial contest to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. High school students are asked to write a column or editorial or produce a short video that best answers the question, "Why is it important to take the It Can Wait pledge to drive distraction free?"

Beginning last fall, PNA members hosted local contests and encouraged high school students to help to make roadways safer for Pennsylvanians. A winner was recognized in each community and entered in the statewide contest, which drew more than 100 entries from across the state.

In selecting Liriano as the Pennsylvania winner, judges commented, “Amy’s video was outstanding! What a great combination of humor and fun with a shocking and impactful ending. We feel this well-scripted and easy-to-follow production will resonate with teen peers as well as adults, truly bringing home the important message of distracted driving hazards.”

Additional students were recognized with second and third place awards. Lizzie Sankus, a freshman at Tri-Valley High School, Valley View, receives second place honors featuring a \$250 prize. Sankus was also recognized by The Citizen-Standard, Valley View. Tying for third place are Kurt Disarapong, a Neshaminy High School freshman in Langhorne, and Nola Zook, a sophomore at Saegertown High School. Each receives a \$150 cash prize.

Distracted driving is involved in hundreds of thousands of vehicle crashes each year, often involving injuries and death. Despite knowing the risks, nearly nine out of ten people admit to using their smartphones while driving and four in ten drivers call distracted driving a habit.

“It Can Wait” is a national movement urging drivers to visit www.ItCanWait.com, where they can pledge to keep their eyes on the road, not on their phone, and share their pledges via Twitter (#ItCanWait) and Facebook. Since its launch in 2010, the campaign has helped increase awareness of the dangers of texting while driving to about 90 percent for all audiences surveyed and inspired more than 40 million pledges not to text and drive.

About PNA Foundation:

The PNA Foundation is an independent, non-profit corporation organized as a public foundation. Its mission is to provide training and resources to PNA members, to develop the next generation of readers and journalists, and to educate the public on the importance of the First Amendment and the role of a free press.

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About PNA: The PNA, founded in 1925, is the nonprofit trade association for print and digital news media in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its mission is to advance the business interests of Pennsylvania news media organizations and to promote a free and independent press. It has more than 300 newspaper and media-related members, including daily, weekly, and college newspapers and online publications.

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