



Youth Achievement Award (YAA) - Guidelines

Calling all Middle School & High School Students! Here is a chance to win a cash prize with the Hum Sub Youth Achievement Award (YAA). The Hum Sub Youth Achievement Award is inspired by the Buddha's parting message to his disciples "Aapo Deepo Bhava", or "Be a light unto yourself."

The award recognizes youth with outstanding achievements in community service, leadership, research, academics, performing arts, and sports. We are looking for well-rounded students who are ready to take the lead and make a difference in our communities.

This award is open to all Middle & High School students in North Carolina, not just of Asian-Indian descent.

Award

Cash prizes will be given to top 2 winners in the High School and Middle School categories:

- 1st place winner: \$1000
- 2nd place winner: \$500

Awards will be presented in front of a 18,000-strong crowd at our flagship Hum Sub Diwali event on **Oct 10, 2026**

Application Deadline

Applications, with all required materials and recommendation letter(s), must be submitted by 11:59pm on

Sep 13, 2026

Selection Criteria

- Winners will be carefully chosen by a panel of judges identified by Hum Sub Board members. Their decision is final and cannot be contested.
- What we are looking for:
 - o Outstanding Youth Leadership / Achievement - You played a major leadership role in creating, organizing, and implementing your project or accomplishing your goal. Show us how you impacted the success of your work.
 - o Project / Achievement Impact, Scalability, and Replicability - Is the achievement / project's impact significant? Can your work be used as a model for other individuals?
 - o Community engagement will be measured as per the rubric mentioned below.
 - o Charisma, Personal Commitment, and Trajectory
 - What draws you to this work and what personal growth have you achieved as a result? What would winning the Youth Achievement Award mean to you?
- Provide two non-family member references to support your application.
- You may submit up to 5 photographs to support your application



- Provide a **video response** for this topic:

250 years of America: how will diversity maintain American leadership in the future?

Video Guidelines

- Video should not be more than 50mb
- Video should be in “Landscape Mode”
- Video must be in an acceptable format: wma, mpg, mp4 and mov

All answers are welcome. There is no one ideal solution. We are looking for the most creative answers and evidence of out-of-the-box thinking!

You must complete your own application. Parents, friends, mentors, teachers, etc. must not complete it for you. The submission of resumes, newspaper clippings, etc. is not permitted.

Benefits for High Schoolers

- Winners in 9th and 10th grade will have an option to become Hum Sub Youth Ambassador (YA)
- Access to leadership initiatives at Hum Sub
- Volunteer hours and recommendation letters to help with college applications

Eligibility

- NC-based applicants only
- Enrolled in Grades 6 to 12 on March 15, 2026
- Participation: Lead or a Key member on high-impacting projects
- One entry per person
- Previous winners are not eligible for the award
- Family members, immediate or extended, of Hum Sub Board members and volunteers are ineligible for this award



Community Engagement Rubric

Definition: Civic (or community) engagement is working to impact change in our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Values Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Holds personal and at times restrictive views, but is open to learn and change	Actively participates in community building activities	Takes initiative to create and organize activities for wider community participation
Community Engagement Projects	Participates in various community engagement projects available in the Triangle area	Takes on leadership responsibilities in community engagement projects to manage outcomes	Actively creates programs for community engagement, recruits participants, delegates responsibilities and holds leaders accountable for their areas of responsibility
Charisma, Personal Commitment, and Trajectory	Actively participates in honing personality characteristics to present his/her best self	Actively encourages participation by being a role-model for other youth	Actively mentors other youth in a “teach the teacher” framework