

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2025

Indiana County Chamber of Commerce Celebrates 3rd Annual Excellence in Education Awards

INDIANA, PA — The Indiana County Chamber of Commerce proudly hosted its 3rd Annual *Excellence in Education Awards*, presented by Colonial Motor Mart, on Monday, April 28, at the Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex.

This inspiring event, made possible through Indiana CountyReady™—a collaborative soft skills initiative with every Indiana County school district and the Indiana County Technology Center (ICTC)—highlights the academic achievements, school/community involvement, leadership, and personal growth of students who are shaping the future workforce.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Colonial Family of Dealerships were proud to award Giavanna Previte the 2025 Student of the Year Award. Gia is a student at Indiana County Technology Center from River Valley School District and will receive a 2025 Mitsubishi Mirage from Colonial as part of the award.

Michael Dolges, a teacher at Indiana Area School District, was awarded the Teacher of the Year Award. He will be awarded a 2025 Toyota Corolla from Colonial.

Over seven months, 56 students were recognized for their excellence in academics, community, and school involvement, personal growth, and development of essential skills. These young leaders represent the best of what our Indiana County schools and community strive to nurture.

The Chamber was honored to welcome back Lindsay Ward, Morning News Anchor for KDKA and a proud Indiana County native. A graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania ('08) and Penns Manor Area High School, Ward delivered a powerful keynote address that resonated deeply with attendees. Drawing from her journey, she encouraged students and educators to pursue their goals with perseverance and integrity. Ward was recently recognized with the 2023 IUP Young Alumni Award, a Keystone Media Award for Feature Story, and multiple Emmy nominations for both reporting and anchoring excellence.

This event was made possible thanks to the generous support of CJ Spadafora, Colonial Motor Mart, and numerous community partners committed to education and youth development.

Additionally, the Chamber extends its gratitude to the United Way of Indiana County for presenting two philanthropic scholarships honoring exceptional philanthropic and volunteer efforts. The philanthropic teacher of the year was awarded to Tim Bash from Indiana County Technology Center. Max Julian from Indiana Area School District was awarded the philanthropic student of the year. Both will be awarded \$1000 from the United Way of Indiana County.

Seven exceptional student finalists were also recognized with \$500 scholarships from the United Way of Indiana County:

- **Elizabeth Kinner**, Indiana Area School District
- **Elizabeth Diehl**, Penns Manor Area School District
- **Hannah Rudnik**, United School District
- **Riley Misick**, Homer-Center School District
- **Jakob Mountain**, Purchase Line School District
- **Collin Anderson**, Marion Center Area School District
- **Holden Fridley**, River Valley School District

We are proud to share that Gia Previte and Michael Dolges will receive one year of vehicle insurance coverage at no cost, thanks to the generous support of Good & Associates Insurance and Hutton-Blews Insurance, who partnered as our first-year vehicle insurance sponsors for student and teacher honorees. Their commitment to supporting recipients beyond the classroom is a powerful reflection of our community's dedication to both educational excellence and workforce readiness.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our event sponsors and community partners, whose support brought this celebration to life:

The Reschini Group, S&T Bank, Indiana Regional Medical Center, First Commonwealth Bank, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, United Way of Indiana County, Rosebud Mining, YMCA of Indiana County, Small Town Home Services LLC, B & G Brothers Rentals, Tri-County Workforce Investment Board, Inc., Good & Associates Insurance, and Hutton-Blews Insurance.

Special thanks to **Kris Mellinger - Photos By Miss Kris** for capturing the pride and joy of the evening. A complete event photo album can be viewed at:

<https://krismellinger.passgallery.com/-awardsfore.../gallery>

About the Indiana County Chamber of Commerce

The Indiana County Chamber of Commerce serves as the voice of business in the county, fostering economic development, education, and community collaboration. Through programs like Indiana CountyReady™, the Chamber is committed to building a brighter future by investing in tomorrow's leaders today.