

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD student discovers unsung heroes who changed the world

Office of Strategy and
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Charleston, SC – Nicholas Turco, a Charleston County School of the Arts sixth grader, was named a \$1,000 winner of the Lowell Milken Center (LMS) for Unsung Heroes' annual Discovery Award competition – Outstanding Elementary School Award.

Turco's research led to his documentary *Discoveries for the Centuries*, sharing the struggles and achievements of unsung hero Mary Anning. Anning defied sexism in the scientific community as a successful fossil collector and paleontologist who made several discoveries that changed paleontology forever. Carolina Park Elementary School teacher Mary Huffman encouraged Turco to complete the project while he was in her fifth-grade class last year.

"As Mary Anning had perseverance facing poverty, I had perseverance completing the project," said Turco. "That goes to show that everyone should follow Mary Anning's example always having the proper mindset. Mary Anning did not have fame or riches, yet she lived her life to her best and truly did her impact on Earth. We should not just have perseverance and motivation, we should also have the attitude of being content with what we have and make a change on Earth, not wanting riches in the process. Mary Anning demonstrated this extraordinarily."

"Nicholas has always been a hard worker, but his strong work ethic really shined during our COVID lockdown in the spring because he was completing his school work along with research for this Discovery Award," said Huffman. "Nicholas and I conferenced using Zoom at least six times throughout his presentation development process to make sure that his research included the passion of Mary Anning along with evidence to support her accomplishments."

LMC awarded elementary, middle, and high school students a total of \$13,000 in cash prizes in its 2019-20 Discovery Award competition. The international competition is designed to inspire students by prompting them to conduct primary and secondary research projects on unsung heroes from history whose accomplishments remain largely unknown to the public.

The \$13,000 in cash prizes can be used in any way students see fit. Due to COVID-19, students were notified about their winnings via video call.

LMC's Discovery Award provides U.S. and international students in grades 4-12 a unique opportunity. Projects can take the form of documentary/multimedia, performance or website and require robust research, an annotated bibliography and a process paper. The unsung heroes' stories must show potential for life beyond the development of the project, and an ability to inspire students and others to take sustainable actions that carry out the legacies of their subjects.

"In modern day society people have lost sight to their spark," said Turco. "If we only just listen and see what people did in the past so magnificently, then our society would be magnificent. Mary Anning was only eleven years old when she found her spark, now it takes decades for people to find their spark. Some people may disagree with this statement, but having humility in this day of age will have everyone bring change like Mary Anning did. Therefore, let's listen and study not just Mary Anning, but all of the unsung heroes throughout time so we can make ourselves heroes to make an impact."

"Real heroes' tower and guide," said LMC Founder Lowell Milken. "But their stories need to be discovered and heard. When we do, we have the opportunity to motivate new generations to aspire to values that are essential during the challenging times we face individually, as a nation and as a world community."

Submissions for the next competition season will open mid-2021.

To view all of the winning projects, [click here](#). For more information contact the Office of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.

About LMC

Established in 2007, the Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes (LMC) discovers, develops and communicates the stories of unsung heroes who have made a profound and positive impact on history, yet are largely unrecognized by contemporary generations. LMC has reached over 2,000,000 students and 11,000 schools in all 50 states and countries around the world.