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Contact:

Danielle Riggio-Armano
Collingswood High School
PAWSTV/Film Department
424 Collings Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108
Office: 856-962-5701
Fax: 856-962-5565
darmano@collsk12.org
www.collsk12.org

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CHS Students Overcome Pandemic Challenges to Sweep Local Awards

Collingswood, NJ - For the past year, students in the visual and performing arts at Collingswood High School have stepped out of their zone to showcase their amazing talents and that includes students in the video and film production program. The pandemic didn't seem to stop the PAWSTV students. On March 13, 2020, when in-studio productions ended abruptly and the doors closed on Studio 174, the 15-year-old program set out to continue their journey in uncharted waters. Fortunately, they had capable and skilled student leaders. Along with their teacher and advisor, Mrs. Armano, seniors Fiona Basewitz, Tyler Kolecki, and Ava Madarieta, guided their classmates on what would be an unprecedented school year.



Pictured above (L-R): Ava Madarieta, Tyler Kolecki, and Fiona Basewitz



Pictured above (L-R): Joseph Degenhart, Josiah Angehr, and Dakota Williams

Producing almost exclusively in the field, students managed to use their skills to create videos of professional quality. From public service advertisements for COVID to short films, music videos and documentaries, PAWSTV students excelled in every aspect of production. Using field equipment provided by Mrs. Armano, students worked remotely to write, shoot, and edit videos which demonstrated their resilience to adapt to the challenging situation.

Encountering multiple quarantines, internet instability, and lack of access to the usual actors from the Panther student body, juniors and seniors in the TV/Film program directed family members, friends, and accessible teachers in award winning media projects.

The students participated in three competitions this year, receiving nominations and winning in each. Senior Tyler Kolecki's documentary film about a preschool adjusting to the pandemic titled "Covid Through Kaleidoscope", senior

Joseph Degenhart's documentary about environmental invasive species in Collingswood titled "Space Invaders", junior Dakota Williams documentary about small business owners and their struggles during the pandemic titled "Resilience", and junior Josiah Angehr's documentary "No One Said It Would Be Easy" about generational challenges during the pandemic, were all nominated for excellence at the nationally acclaimed Garden State Film Festival. Josiah's film won top honors as New Jersey's Best High School Film.

Rowan University's annual Media Festival gave recognition of excellence in video production by nominating several PAWSTV students in various categories. Josiah's documentary about his family's challenges during the pandemic and senior Joseph Degenhart's video production about invasive species received nominations. Senior Ava Madarieta's production titled "Chasing Calvin", about a CHS senior's personal struggles and accomplishments on and off the football field, won her top honors at the statewide competition.

Closing out the competition season was the annual Mid-Atlantic Student EMMY Awards hosted by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. This year PAWSTV students received four nominations. Tyler Kolecki and Fiona Basewitz's music video is about a young girl struggling with her self-image after a relationship break up titled "Gasoline". Ava Madarieta's music video symbolically depicting personal challenges and resembling an episode of "Queen's Gambit" also received a nomination. The PAWSTV news magazine "Good Morning Collingswood" received a nomination for outstanding news coverage. Winning a 2021 EMMY for the PAWSTV program was Josiah's documentary "No One Said It Would Be Easy".



Pictured above: Tyler Kolecki



Pictured above (L-R): Ava Madarieta, Asia Yarborough



Pictured above (L-R): Joshua Forrest, Michael Johnson

As the school year comes to a close, the program will see several of its dedicated and skilled students heading off to college to major in Communications, TV Production and Film Studies. Tyler Kolecki will attend Hofstra University to major in TV Production and Joseph Degenhart will attend Montclair University majoring in Film Production. Ava Madarieta will begin her college education at Rowan College of South Jersey and transferring to the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts. Fiona Basewitz will attend the University of William and Mary as a marketing major. Michael Johnson will attend Camden County College for Film Studies and Aron Arnarson O'Neill will head off to the Icelandic School of Film. Seniors Joshua Forrest, Asia Yarbrough, and Ayanna Jones will take their production skills and talents to the University of Buffalo, Rutgers University, and Montclair University as they continue their education in various schools of study.

All videos and films are available for viewing on YouTube at [CHSPAWSTV174](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC174)