# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# SOAPBOX Derby





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Photographs throughout represent 2019 since 2020 events were cancelled due to the pandemic.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Every year, it is my honor and privilege to address all constituents of the Soap Box Derby in this annual report, including our sponsors, donors, volunteers, community partners and, most importantly, the

thousands of boys and girls and their families who participate in local races. rallies, education programs and other events in communities throughout the United States and several foreign countries.

The year 2020 has been like none other in our lifetimes. Our world changed dramatically early last spring when the COVID-19 pandemic began its attacks on our daily lives. We worked diligently to develop approaches to stage race events that could run safely for participants, volunteers and spectators. Unfortunately, it simply could not happen. After many local races and rallies were canceled and concerns were growing for travel and for safe gatherings of large numbers of people, we made the difficult decision to suspend all racing and the FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby for the first time since World War II.

Our organization is heartened and grateful for the support of our title sponsor FirstEnergy, other sponsors, foundations, donors, volunteers and community leaders who have remained loyal to the Soap Box Derby during this challenging year. We also are especially thankful for the efforts of our Racing and Rally Commissions, Regional Directors and local race organizations around the country who

have played such a vital role to keep the Soap Box Derby moving forward.

We were extremely sad that youth and their families could not race over the spring and summer. However, we are pleased that many of our local race organizations have been able to return to racing this fall by staging nearly half of the rally events of a pre-pandemic fall season.

Education continues to play a vital role in Soap Box Derby participation. In addition to hands-on programs in schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H and churches also are important to growth in our racing program. We are thankful that foundations and donor support has enabled us to give back nearly \$100,000 during the year in education programs for schools in Akron, Summit County and Northeast Ohio.

As we move into 2021 while continuing to navigate through COVID challenges, our first priority will remain the safety and well-being of our racers, families, volunteers and staff. Social distancing, hand cleansing and size restrictions of gatherings will be part of our lives for the foreseeable future.

We look forward to successful local races and rallies that will send champions to Akron next July for the 83rd running of the FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby.

Thank you for your support and we are excited to welcome you back to Derby Downs in 2021!

Sincerely,

Mark Gerberich President & CEO

## **ABOUT US**

The International Soap Box Derby® is a non-profit youth education and leadership development organization whose mission is to build knowledge and character, and to create meaningful experiences through collaboration, fair and honest racing competitions, STEM curriculum, and other community-focused activities.

#### WHAT WE DO

The Derby is the official sanctioning body of Soap Box Derby racing and has exclusive licensing partnerships with more than 100 race cities throughout world. These race cities conduct sanctioned Soap Box Derby races throughout the year and qualify champs for the annual FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby® World

Championship race at the world-famous Derby Downs Track in Akron, Ohio.

A fast-growing segment of the organization, The Derby's Education Program includes a STEM-Based Curriculum, the Gravity Racing Challenge® STEM Team Competition and a Mini Soap Box Derby program.

The Board of Directors oversees the operation of the Derby, and the day-to-day activities are handled by the Headquarters staff in Akron.

The Derby also operates the world famous Derby Downs Track in Akron, Ohio where various events are held throughout the racing season.



Mark Gerberich, President & CEO Evan Gannon, Events Manager

Linda Hubbell, Education Program Director Cory Katzenmeyer, Marketing Manager

Heather Morrow, Director of Operations **Doreen Thorne**, Marketing & Grants Director Cindi Zagar, Finance Director

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Derby Volunteer** 

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#### **Kevin Thomas**

VP, AAA Akron Auto Club

#### **Bob Troyer**

**Public Relations Consultant** 

#### **Thomas Welsh**

Retired Senior VP, FirstEnergy

## THE HISTORY OF THE SOAP BOX DERBY



1946 winner Gilbert Klecan of San Diego, California



1976 first Kit Car Champion Phil Raber

The Derby dates back to 1934, when the first All-American race was held in Dayton, Ohio. The All-American program has grown to more than 1,300 races and more than 100 racing cities throughout the world each year.

The FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby Racing Program and the STEM-Based Education Program provide educational opportunities and youth leadership development for youth in grades K-12.

The Gravity Racing Challenge STEM Team Competition, Soap Box Derby Mini-Car Program, Soap Box Derby STEM camps and our STEM Curriculum are being used by more than 830 schools.

1934



First All-American Soap Box Derby ran in Dayton, OH. The winner was 11-year-old Bob Turner of Muncie, IN. 1935



The second All-American Soap Box Derby was moved to Akron and ran on Tallmadge Avenue Hill. 1936



Derby Downs opened.

Built by the Works Progress

Administration (WPA).

1946



Soap Box Derby racing resumed after a four-year suspension during World War II.

1971



Girls competed in Soap Box Derby racing for the first time. 1975



11-year-old Karren Stead of Lower Bucks County, PA, became the first girl to win the All-American Soap Box Derby World Championship. 1976



The Junior-Division was added for racers ages. 10-12 with cars, built from hardware supplied in a kit and with patterns for the floorboards.

1986



races were held. Racers had potential to earn a wildcard slot for the All-American Soap Box Derby.

1992



The Stock Car division
was added for ages
8 through 13. A new
headquarters building opened
on the west side of the track.

1993



Rally division champions quality for The All-American Championship Race. 1995



Super Stock kit cars replaced kit cars in 1995. 1997



as the first Hall of Fame recipient to recognize devotion of time, talent and financial support.

2012



More than 550 racers ages 7 to 17 competed in the 75th FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby. They represented 40 states, Canada, Germany, Japan and New Zealand. 2016



The Soap Box Derby Scholarship fund was renamed to the Bill Speeg Memorial Scholarship fund. 2017



Marion Wells of Indianapolis, IN became the first African-American All-American Soap Box Derby World Champion. 2020



Soap Box Derby Local and Rally racing was impeded due to COVID-19 and the FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby World Championship was canceled.

# A WIDESPREAD IMPACT

The Soap Box Derby strives to have a positive impact throughout many levels, particularly local schools and communities. New programs blending fun and learning are thoughtfully developed to engage and challenge our youth toward technical fields. The grants and individual donations awarded in 2020 provided the opportunities and equipment listed below.







#### EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

In the last two fiscal years, the Soap Box Derby has contributed nearly \$220,000 to support schools and organizations with their Soap Box Derby STEM Education Programs. We will continue to expand these programs through grants and individual donations.





Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fair

Nearly \$100,000 was contributed towards Soap Box Derby STEM Educational materials during 2020 for the following schools/organizations:

- Akron Children's Museum
- Akron Public Schools: Ellet High School Hatton Community Learning Center Hyre Middle School **I** Promise Innes Middle School Sam Salem Elementary
- Akron Urban League
- Barberton Local Schools: Barberton East Elementary Barberton West Elementary Barberton High School
- Coventry Local Schools: Coventry Elementary Coventry High School
- Cuyahoga Falls Local Schools: Elizabeth Price Elementary School Preston Elementary School Woodridge Intermediate
- Green Local Schools: Green High School Green Intermediate School
- Holy Family School
- Indy 500 Festival
- Launch Kenmore
- Mogadore Local Schools: O.H. Sommers Elementary School
- Salvation Army
- South Street Ministries
- Springfield Local Schools: Springfield High School
- Summit County Fatherhood Initiative
- Towpath Trail

## LONG-TERM VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have been the foundation of the Soap Box Derby since its beginning. We rely heavily on our volunteers to ensure success in all of our race cities. We are fortunate to have more than 3,300 volunteers who support all of our events yearly around the world.

Volunteers all over the country worked diligently to help bring back racing safely with best COVID-19 practices. The Soap Box Derby appreciates our volunteers and would like to recognize these individuals for their work and continued support.

#### **Regional Directors**

Name	Region Number
Rich Johnson	1
Christopher Harri	s 2
Jerry Van Waart	3
John Evans	4
Elizabeth Kimball	5
Jamey Allen	6
Eric Griffin	7
Jim Hagan	8
Matt Findley	8
Mark Marine	8
Mark Scuderi	9
Marty Sullivan	10
Mike Corson	11
Tommy Waters	12

#### Rally Commission

Jamey Allen Gene Blackwell Lisa Carpenter Brian Graham Bill Graham Alan Howe Anne Taylor Buzz Pankoff Marco luarez

#### A-Team

James Albertoni Mikey Bates Vickie Beck Bill Behan Mike Castner

#### A-Team, Continued

Amy Costello

Elizabeth Costello Leo Costello Lynne Costello Maryann Costello Mathew Costello Christine Donovan IP Fedele Ed Harmon John Harmon leanette Harris Dave Hubbell Nick Hubbell Dean Huminsky Bruce Hunsicker Jr. Nancy Iula lim ledd Ann Marine Xander Nihart Steve McClellan Allison Pankoff Ken Roser George Stewart Abigail Waldron Marylin Waters Annalee Werntz Dennis Werntz

#### Racina Commission

Paul Bates Sr. Linda Burkhammer Gary Conner Dan Costello John Costello

#### Racing **Commission**, Continued

**Bob Cooper** Bo Donovan Craig Flury Leon Hershberger Todd Hinton Ron Keller Will Looman Nancy Mooney Bobby Nickoli Michael Rushina Keith Scheurman Dennis Sklack Barb Sovil **Bob Sovil** Alvin Staples Travis Staples **Brian Waaster** Del Waldron

#### **Associate Racing** Commission

Dan Hughes Al Gallo Larry Gallimore Bruce Hunsicker John Kelly Chuck Maggi John "Butch" Mitchell Dale Russell Fran Seabeck Phil Schultz Jim Underwood Roy Woodall

## FINANCIAL POSITION



Allstate Volunteers



GPD Group Volunteers

## **ASSETS**

Cash and Cash Equivalents \$279,535

Accounts Receivable \$15,596

Other Assets \$365,293

Inventories \$157,030

Property & Equipment (net) \$1,835,616

Total \$2,653,070

### **Operating Expenses**



## **LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS**

 Current Liabilities
 \$393,222

 Long Term Liabilities
 \$402,502

 Total Equity
 \$1,857,346

 Total
 \$2,653,070

## **Operating Income**



## 2020 PRESIDENT'S YOUTH VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

Four young volunteers of the Soap Box Derby program have been selected to receive the President's Youth Volunteer Service Award, which recognizes volunteers under the age of 21 who have made a positive impact on the Soap Box Derby through their leadership on the local, regional or national level.



**ERIN DONOVAN** OF FAGIFVILLE **PENNSYIVANIA** 



**LUKAS RAMEY** OF HANSON, KENTUCKY



BRAFDON QUINLAN OF ARLINGTON, MASSACHIISFTTS



SAMANTHA UHLER OF HOWARD. **PFNNSYIVANIA** 

Erin Donovan, 16, is a third-generation racer who has been competing in local Soap Box Derby events since 2011. She won the Local Stock division race in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, in 2012, making her first of eight trips to the FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box as a local or rally champion. She won the world championship twice - in the Rally Stock division in 2013 and in Rally Super Stock in 2019. At local races and rallies, Erin mentors other racers to help familiarize them with various racing procedures and driving skills. During the Akron All-American finals, she volunteers for various events at the track. She will be a junior this fall at Methacton High School in Eagleville.

Braedon Quinlan, 18, raced in all divisions of the Soap Box Derby – Stock, Super Stock, and Masters – over a 10 year-period beginning in 2009. He won the Super Stock title in the Arlington Soap Box Derby in 2017, earning a berth in that year's FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby. He also raced in Akron in 2019 in the new Leaacy division. Quinlan has been a volunteer in the Arlington Derby program since he was 13, described by race officials as an "indispensable contributor" and "natural leader" who will volunteer in any way to support and promote the local Soap Box Derby program. He recently graduated from Arlington High School and will attend Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York this fall.

Lukas Ramey, 16, first competed in 2012 in the Soap Box Derby in Madisonville, Kentucky and won the Stock division championship in 2013. He represented Madisonville at the 2013 All-American championships – the first of seven consecutive years in Akron as a Local or Rally champion in all three racing divisions. He won the world championship in the 2015 Rally Stock competition, bringing media and community attention to the Madisonville program. Since 2012, Ramey has helped promote Soap Box Derby interest through presentations at local events, riding in parades, mall and museum displays and media interviews. He helps with set-up and race day operations in several cities. Ramey will be a junior at Madisonville North Hopkins High School in the fall.

Samantha Uhler, 18, has raced in Soap Box Derby competitions for seven seasons, starting in the Masters division in Dubois, Pennsylvania in 2014. She earned berths in the All-American Soap Box Derby as a rally champion in 2016, as local champion in the Masters division in 2017, local Super Stock champion in 2018 and a rally masters contestant in 2019. A member of the junior committee of the Dubois race organization, Samantha raises racing interest through school projects. She openly shares her knowledge of car construction and driving skills with younger racers and helps with track set-up and tear-down. She helped prepare faculty to teach Soap Box Derby technology as part of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum for elementary and middle school students. She graduated this spring from Bald Eagle High School in Wingate, Pennsylvania.

# PREVIOUS PRESIDENT'S YOUTH VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

2019 SARAH KOLESAR of Green, Ohio

2019 XANDER NIHART of Utica, Ohio

2019 ALLISON PANKOFF of Parker, Colorado

2019 ABIGAIL WALDRON LLOYD of Roanoke, Virginia

2018 NICK HUBBELL of Johnstown, Ohio

2018 GEORDAN WELLS of Indianapolis, Indiana

**2018 TREVOR WIESNER** of Spencerport, New York

2017 ALEX SEITHER of Mason, Ohio

2016 VERONICA HARRIS of Campbell, California

2016 LAURA HUBBELL of Johnstown, Ohio

2015 JORDAN PRUDEN of Bowling Green, Kentucky

2015 AARON ROHRBAUGH of Culpeper, Virginia

2015 TAKATERU "TERU" YAMAMOTO of Japan



## HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES 2020



#### JOHN EVANS OF LEE'S SUMMIT, MISSOURI

John Evans, 79, grew up in Independence, Missouri and raced in the nearby Kansas City Soap Box Derby for four years beginning in 1952. Evans won the local race when he was 14 in 1955 and competed in the All-American Soap Box Derby. He never lost his passion for the Soap Box Derby, joining the Kansas City Derby board in 1990, and continues to serve as a local advisor. Evans has been a regional director of the All-American Soap Box Derby since 2002, advising local race programs in eight states from Missouri north to North Dakota and west to Wyoming. His interest in racing was passed down to daughter Megan who raced beginning in 1995. She was the world rally champion at the 2002 All-American in the Super Stock division. Evans is a commercial real estate developer and owner.



#### WILLIAM J. GINTER OF AKRON, OHIO

Bill Ginter, 74, became involved in the Soap Box Derby in late 2009, leading an effort to stabilize the financial position and operations of the organization. As a long-time Akron civic leader, Ginter engaged local government and the business community to provide financial, management and governance support to the youth racing program. He joined the Soap Box Derby board of directors in 2010 and served as chairman from 2011 through 2016. Ginter was instrumental in securing FirstEnergy Corporation as title sponsor in 2012. He continues as an honorary board member of the Soap Box Derby and is a current or former officer or board member of United Way of Summit County, Akron Red Cross, Greater Akron Chamber, Summit County Board of Development Disabilities, Summa Health System, Summa Foundation, Workforce Development Board and BlueCoats. He retired as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Advanced Elastomer Systems in 1998; he is a commercial real estate developer and serves on the advisory boards of several private companies.



#### **BOBBY NICKOLI OF LAGRANGE, OHIO**

Bobby Nickoli, who passed away this year at 71, started racing in the Cleveland Soap Box Derby in 1960, winning the local race and competing in the All-American Soap Box Derby in 1964. As a teenager, he helped promote the Soap Box Derby through presentations at Boy Scout meetings. In the late 1960s, he helped launch the Soap Box Derby in Amherst, Ohio, and later became active in the Cleveland race, where he has served as an inspector and race director. Nickoli helped plan and build the permanent Cleveland racetrack. He joined the A-Team at the All-American Soap Box Derby in 2003 and served as a member of the Racing Commission from 2015 through 2019. Nickoli helped set up the Ultimate Speed division in the early 2000s and continued as an Ultimate Speed official through 2018. He also helped launch the Legacy division in 2019. Nickoli was a member of the competition committee and an honorary member of the Soap Box Derby board of directors. He was a retired accountant and was a wonderful person to all those who knew him.

Established in 1997, The Soap Box Derby® Hall of Fame honors individuals who have made exemplary contributions to improve the sport, enhance the youth racing program or help its participants through significant financial or sponsorship support.

## PREVIOUS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

- 2019 Brian Graham, Ed Harmon, Will Looman
- 2018 Carole Berry, Craig Flury
- 7017 Ken Cline, Mark Packard
- **2016** Chuck Jones, John Esque, Bill Speeg
- 2015 Bob Cooper, Fran Seabeck, Bud Seabeck
- 2014 Rick Acker, Alan Howe, Mark Scuderi
- 2013 Bill Harris, Ken Morrow, Marty Sullivan
- 2012 Dale Russell, Millie Esque, Jack Engelke
- 2011 Jerry Van Waart, Pat Taylor
- 2010 Norm Perry
- 2009 George Rodenbaugh, Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic
- 2008 Brooks Townsend, Don Huminsky, Ron Reed, Russ Kinsey
- 2007 Jack Gormley, Bob McLaughlin, Jimmy Collier
- 2006 Bob Campbell, Herman "Tex" Finsterwald, Bruce Hunsicker, Jeff Iula
- 2005 Shirley Foster, Tony DeLuca, Paul Arnsmeyer, Roy Hartz
- 2004 Don Adams, David J. Holly, Ira C. Sapozink, Ronald Reagan
- 2003 Jim Underwood, Bob Troyer, Bill Kuntz
- 2002 Bill Ford, Jack Morran, Bob Turner
- Don Lenox, Don Meech, Tom Kilroy, Ray Schieb
- 2000 Bruce Buchholzer, Bob Gravett, Ron Baker
- 1999 Marie Wright, Ralph Barnes, Ralph Iula, Loris C. Troyer, Frank A. 'Whitey" Wahl
- 1998 John S. Knight, Mason Bell, George W. Brittain, Jim Ott, Howard Flood
- 1997 Myron E. Scott, Bain E. "Shorty" Fulton, Jim Schlemmer, Jimmy Stewart, Wilbur Shaw





## **OUR PARTNERS**

Our programs and events would not be possible without the support of all partners listed. A sincere thank you to all who help with our youth racing program!

### FOUNDATIONS October 2019 to September 2020

**Organizations Grant Support** 

AAA Advised Fund of the Tuscarawas County Community Foundation

Akron Community Foundation Community Fund

Anonymous

**Barberton Community Foundation** 

Glenn R. and Alice V. Boggess Memorial Foundation

Kenneth L. Calhoun Charitable Trust

City of Akron Neighborhood Partnership

City of Barberton Community Development Block Grant

City of Cuyahoga Falls Community Development Block Grant

The Mary S. and David C. Corbin Foundation

County of Summit Community Development Block Grant

GPD Employees' Foundation

Greater Akron Lodging Council - Akron Destination Marketing Fund

Huntington Charitable Grant Program

The Lehner Family Foundation

The Maynard Family Foundation

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Corporate Derby Challenge winners

## IN-KIND DONORS October 2019 to September 2020

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## DONORS October 2019 to September 2020

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Elisa Tingler

Frederick Tomei

Michelle Tomer

Jennifer Towell

**Bob Troyer** 

Anne Vainer

Dennis Van Fossen

Jerry Van Waart

Roger Van Waart

William Vartorella

Brian Waaster

Susan Walker

Wayside Furniture

Iulia Werner

Richard Wetzel

Bill White

Rick Wolfe

Elementary/middle school PS-57 of Stanton Island, New York receives a Gravity Racing Challenge Stock Car Championship trophy

DERBY DRIVERS honor the mission of the Derby by recognizing individuals who make significant investments to build on our legacy. Part of the Soap Box Derby's Annual Appeal, Derby Drivers recognizes individuals who contribute sustaining unrestricted annual gifts for Derby operations.

#### **MASTER DRIVERS**

James & Barbara Bernard Rob & Alyssa Briggs Bonnie Freeberg Charles & Kimberly Jones Mary Beth Kluge Roger Read

#### SUPER STOCK DRIVERS

#### \$2.500

Bill & Becky Considine Guy & Renee Pipitone **Bob Troyer** 

#### **STOCK DRIVERS**

Elizabeth Bartz Bill Choler Cary Conrad **Bobby Cooper** Dick Dawson Iason Dil auro Patricia & Peter Geise Mark & Beth Gerberich Robert & Katrina Getts William (Bill) J. Ginter The Goumas Family Jay Griffith

#### **STOCK DRIVERS**

#### \$1,000 CONTINUED

The Todd Guilliam Family James Hagan Christopher & JoAnna Harris Craig & Suzie Hasssinger Arturo & Karen Hernandez Jesse & Rachel Hurst Don & Elaine Johnson Gil Klecan Robert & Kelly Knapp Will Looman Bill Lowery Eric & Nan McClenaghan Gregg & Terrill Mervis Sally D. Miller Russ Mills The Mroczynski Family Robert Neidert Jim & Jolie O'Connor Patricia Roy Keith & Donna Scheurman Mark Scuderi Rod & Danyelle Sweitzer Larry Thienes Kevin Thomas The Wagster & Roser Families Tom & Kathy Welsh Bill White







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