

Voya Honors Phoenix Arizona's Desert Sands Middle School with Third-Place Unsung Heroes Program Award
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"Personal Finance Education" program introduces middle school students to entrepreneurship

Voya Financial, Inc. (NYSE: VOYA), a leading provider of retirement plans for educators, announced today that Desert Sands Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona, won the third-place grant award in the company's annual [Voya Unsung Heroes](#) program.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20191025005257/en/>



Through the Voya Unsung Heroes program, Voya awards \$2,000 grants to 100 K-12 educators across the country each year to support their innovative and creative teaching ideas. Voya also selects three top winners to receive additional funds. In its 20-plus years, the program has awarded more than \$5 million in grants to approximately 2,260 educators across the U.S.

As the third-place winner, educators at Desert Sands Middle School will receive \$5,000 in addition to the \$2,000 grant — bringing their total financial award to \$7,000. This money

Desert Sands Middle School in Phoenix Arizona is awarded a grant for \$7,000 as the third place winner of Voya's Unsung Heroes program. Voya Financial's Jay Jorgensen, senior vice president, Tax Exempt Markets, (pictured on left) presented the check to the school. (Photo: Business Wire)

will be used to help bring "Personal Finance Education" to life at Desert Sands Middle School.

"At Voya, we believe that education is key to healthy communities, which in turn foster the sustainability and growth of the economy — so we're thrilled to recognize our nation's teachers who go above and beyond to inspire today's students and tomorrow's leaders," said Heather Lavalley, president of Tax-Exempt Markets for Voya's Retirement business. "For more than 20 years, our Unsung Heroes program has empowered educators to help bring their innovative ideas to life. We are honored to recognize Desert Sands Middle School as our 2019 third-place winner."

The innovative teaching idea, "Personal Finance Education," focuses on introducing middle school students to entrepreneurship by having them create a business plan for their own food truck. The students will create an identity and local presence for their food truck, in addition to making it functional. From outlining managerial tasks, running social media campaigns, conducting market research and adhering to budget restrictions, students will form a comprehensive and encompassing business plan. At the end, the students will pitch their ideas to community leaders and entrepreneurs as "investors" to foster a greater sense of

community within the area.

“With the help of Voya’s Unsung Heroes program, Desert Sands is excited to continue with our initiative of ‘Personal Finance Education,’ in which our students will focus on entrepreneurship, creating a business plan and presenting their plan to multiple stakeholders in the community,” said Michael Clark, principal of Desert Sands Middle School.

Through “Personal Finance Education,” educators at Desert Sands Middle School hope to facilitate an environment where creativity meets real-world experience so their students can benefit from the wisdom of those before them in order to create a better tomorrow as the future workforce.

To learn more about this year’s winning projects, as well as those from previous years, visit [Unsung Heroes](http://unsungheroes.com) (unsungheroes.com). Applications for the 2020 Voya Unsung Heroes awards are currently being accepted through the website until April 30, 2020.

Unsung Heroes is part of Voya Foundation’s signature program, [Voya Teacher Voices](http://VoyaTeacherVoices.com). Voya Teacher Voices focuses on empowering teachers to become leaders by promoting the teaching career, recognizing high-achieving accomplishments, providing training opportunities and offering financial support to achieve their goals.

About Voya Foundation

Voya Foundation’s mission is to improve the quality of life in communities where Voya Financial operates and its employees and customers live. Voya Foundation provides grants and establishes signature partnerships in the areas of financial literacy and children’s education and fosters employee engagement to deepen our positive impact on the community. For more information, visit www.VoyaFoundation.com

About Voya Financial®

Voya Financial, Inc. (NYSE: VOYA), helps Americans plan, invest and protect their savings — to get ready to retire better. Serving the financial needs of approximately 13.8 million individual and institutional customers in the United States, Voya is a *Fortune 500* company that had \$8.5 billion in revenue in 2018. The company had \$560 billion in total assets under management and administration as of June 30, 2019. With a clear mission to make a secure financial future possible — one person, one family, one institution at a time — Voya’s vision is to be America’s Retirement Company®. Certified as a “Great Place to Work” by the Great Place to Work® Institute, Voya is equally committed to conducting business in a way that is socially, environmentally, economically and ethically responsible. Voya has been recognized as one of the 2019 World’s Most Ethical Companies® by the Ethisphere Institute; as a member of the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index; and as a “Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion” on the Disability Equality Index by Disability:IN. For more information, visit voya.com. Follow Voya Financial on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VoyaFinancial), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/voya-financial) and Twitter [@Voya](https://twitter.com/Voya).

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