

Voya Honors Buda, Texas Teachers With First-Place Unsung Heroes Program Award
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“Switch It!” provides the opportunity for high school students to create switch-adapted toys for children with special needs and physical disabilities

Voya Financial, Inc. (NYSE: VOYA), a leading provider of retirement plans for educators, announced today that Brooke Borreson and Nicki Larson, two teachers at Ralph Pfluger Elementary School in Buda, Texas, have won the first-place grant award in the company's annual [Voya Unsung Heroes](https://www.voya.com/unsung-heroes) program.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20191104005870/en/>



Brooke Borreson and Nicki Larson from Ralph Pfluger Elementary School in Buda, Texas are awarded a grant for \$27,000 as the first place winners of Voya's Unsung Heroes program. Voya Financial's David Bowman, regional vice president, Tax-Exempt Markets, and Jon Reilly, Head of Core Sales and Distribution, Tax-Exempt Markets (pictured on left and right) presented the check to the teachers. The toys pictured are switch adapted toys for students with special needs and disabilities developed as a part of the teacher's "Switch It!" program. (Photo: Business Wire)

Elementary 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, Voya's Unsung Heroes program has empowered educators, like Brooke and Nicki, to help bring their innovative ideas to life. We are honored to recognize them both as our 2019 first-place winners."

Borreson's and Larson's innovative teaching idea, "Switch It!," focuses on helping students with special needs and disabilities physically interact with toys by providing switch-adapted toys, while nurturing an authentic learning experience for high school students in broadcasting, art and marketing classes. Through this work, students will work through a major, multi-step process to learn ways of adapting to creative

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 United States.

As the first-place winners, Borreson and Larson received \$25,000 in addition to the \$2,000 grant — bringing the total financial award to \$27,000. This money will be used to help bring "Switch It!" to life at Ralph Pfluger

differences and collaborating with large, diverse groups of people to achieve a common goal.

"Pfluger is deeply committed to the fullest education we can provide for each child," said Kathy Noack, principal of Ralph Pfluger Elementary School. "Ms. Borreson, our campus speech and language Pathologist, has shown a deep commitment to developing different methods for our students to respond to, and with the world around them. Materials developed through this generous grant from Voya will unlock the world around them, which in many ways has been blocked off to them, since they don't have the language skills to engage with their families, peers and teachers. We are very excited about the opportunity to get this project off the ground."

With the Voya grant, Borreson and Larson plan to purchase materials, software and technology. High school students will then engineer the switch-adapted toys as part of their robotics/engineering classes and curriculum. By combining the experiences of two different groups — students with special needs and disabilities and high school students — and uniting them towards a common goal, Borreson and Larson hope to give students the opportunity to explore the intersection of media and design and expand their own creative potential.

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](#). 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](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Twitter [@Voya](#).

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