



ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
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NEWS RELEASE *for Immediate Release*

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Recreation & Parks Youth Basketball Players Recognized with Will Smith Leadership Awards

LEONARDTOWN, MD – St. Mary's County Government's Department of Recreation & Parks (R&P) is proud to announce the recipients of the **2026 Will Smith Leadership Awards**. These awards recognize 8th grade players in the R&P Youth Basketball League who participate from 6th–8th grade and demonstrate sportsmanship, passion for the game, and leadership both on and off the court.

Nearly 30 young athletes were recognized this year, with players receiving their awards at a ceremony held on Sunday, February 22, 2026, at Great Mills High School.

The Will Smith Leadership Awards were established in 2009 to honor the memory of R&P basketball alumnus William L. Smith, Jr., who lost his life on September 21, 2008, while he was a student at Becker College in Massachusetts. During Smith's six years in the R&P Youth Basketball League, he made a lasting impression on teammates, coaches and the community. He went on to play for Great Mills High School, and he was known not only for his love of basketball but also for the positive spirit he brought to those around him.

R&P extends gratitude to Will's family for being part of this annual tradition to celebrate deserving players in St. Mary's County who represent the highest standards of respect and teamwork.

To see a full list of the 2026 Recipients of the Will Smith Leadership Award, please visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/Docs/willsmithawards2026.pdf.

Learn more about the criteria and nominating process for the awards at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/Docs/willsmithleadershipaward.pdf.

For information about R&P youth sports leagues, including the youth basketball program, visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/recreate.

Stay up to date with R&P events and happenings on social media! Follow us at: [www.Instagram.com/StMarysRecAndParks](https://www.instagram.com/StMarysRecAndParks) and www.Facebook.com/StMarysMDRecreation.

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