

Haunted Attraction Association Awards Two Scholarships

New Annual Scholarships Awarded to Louisiana and Pennsylvania High School Seniors

Columbus, OH. (XX) - The [Haunted Attraction Association](#) (HAA) has awarded two new \$1,000 scholarships to aspiring members of the haunting community, both created to honor two of the industry's greatest contributors. **Bailey Hutzler** of Baton Rouge, Louisiana was awarded the James K. Smith Scholarship, while **Ryan Konopelski**, of Reading, Pennsylvania received the Joe Thaler scholarship at the Midwest Haunters Convention on Saturday, May 26, 2018.

The new scholarships were available to any actor, makeup artist, or other cast or crew member of any HAA member above Associate member level. The recipient was required to be accepted and/or enrolled in an accredited college or university and working toward a two or four-year bachelor, associate, or other degrees. Applicants submitted an online application along with an essay, which the scholarship selection committee reviewed to select the recipients. Submissions for next year's awards will open in January 2019.



Hutzler is the recipient of the James K. Smith Memorial Scholarship. She has been an actress, team lead, and trainer at Rise Haunted House in Tickfaw, Louisiana for four years and will be majoring in Astrophysics with a minor in Physical Theater at Louisiana State University in Fall 2018. The scholarship is named for James K. Smith, a founding member of the International Association of Haunted Attractions, the predecessor of HAA and served on the board for over 20 years.



Konopelski is the winner of the Joe Thaler Scholarship. He began his haunted house involvement in 2013 at Shocktoberfest in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania as an actor and later as part of the build crew. Konopelski plans on majoring in Business at Temple University. The Joe Thaler scholarship honors Joe Thaler, who has produced trade shows for over 45 years, including the biggest haunted house trade show in the industry. Throughout his career, Thaler has been responsible for over 450 shows in 20 different industries and on 3 separate continents.

“We’re very excited to launch this scholarship program, set to reward the most dedicated students who have a strong passion for the haunting industry,” said Brett Hays, President of the Haunted Attraction Association. “We’re inspired by the work of all of our applicants and we hope this award encourages the next generation of haunters to dream big.”

About the Haunted Attraction Association

The Haunted Attraction Association (HAA), the only official association in the haunt industry, serves as the voice of the haunted attraction industry. Our worldwide network of members exchange ideas, information, and experiences via our conferences, exclusive networking events, message boards, newsletters, magazines, and more. HAA members have been featured on national television shows such as “Good Morning America,” “The Today Show,” “The Travel Channel,” and “NBC Nightly News.” HAA membership is open to all haunted attraction owners and operators, vendors, home haunters, conventions, professional actors, makeup artists, costumers, and enthusiasts.

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