**2024 Virginia Hoop Shoot Champs to compete in Regional Championship**

 **Woohoo! Another successful Virginia State Hoop Shoot was held in Waynesboro, Virginia on Sunday, February 11, 2024 despite the drizzle of rain! We were determined not to let it dampen our spirits! This year we had 23 District Champs attending. Contestants checked in at the Waynesboro Elks Lodge # 2270 with Bobbye Kimbrough Netschke and Gigi Jones of Staunton Elks 351. Gigi had put together gift bags for the “Elks Youth Camp and Drug Awareness”. They were distributed to our District Champs and their siblings attending our Virginia Hoop Shoot. Gigi also had Youth Camp applications! A delicious luncheon was prepared by Waynesboro 2270 Elk members Tim Childress, Janice Knott, Maryjane Fretwell, Jean Reece, and Sandy Landes.**

 **Past Grand Lodge Inner Guard Don Netschke announced that the 2023 “Donald E. Netschke Sportsmanship Award” winner was Rory McNerney. A surprised Rory accepted his award while Don spoke about the importance of sportsmanship. Rory competed in the 8-9 Boy Division in 2023. Virginia Director Lynn Rutherford-Snow presented our Virginia Elks President Dennis Henline the traditional Hoop Shoot jacket.**

 **After our luncheon, everyone headed over to Fishburne Military School for the contest. Our Flag presentation was led by Past Grand Lodge Inner Guard and Virginia Elks Association Past President Don Netschke carrying the United States of America flag and our VEA President Dennis Henline carrying Commonwealth of Virginia flag. Exalted Ruler Lennie Hutton of Bedford 2844 sang the National Anthem. Everyone had said the Pledge of Allegiance prior to leaving Waynesboro Elks Lodge. We were honored to have some of our former contestants as our guests: Sophia Palladino, Ford Cook, Hope Drake and her brother Jack Drake. Sophia was National Hoop Shoot Champion in 2011 and 2014. Ford placed third at the National Hoop Shoot in 2016. Hope Drake was a 2019 National Finalist and her brother Jack Drake was 2021 National Finalist.**

 **After several roll-offs, we now have six new Virginia Champions who will represent us at the Regional Contest. The Regional Contest will be held March 8-10, 2024 in Charlottesville, Virginia. Our 2024 Virginia Champions are: Brantley Cottrell / Bedford Elks #2844, Eva Reed / Winchester Elks #867, ‘Ty’ David Willard / Bedford Elks #2844, Ann Greer ‘AG’ Dryden / Richmond Elks #45, Ty’Shir Rhone / Winchester Elks #867, and Kinslie Winterfeldt / Bedford Elks #2844. I know our beloved Past State President Darryl Myers and Past Exalted Ruler Jim Chitwood are beaming in Heaven as we have three Virginia Champions who are from the Southwest District and heading to Regionals!**

 **I was pleased and honored to present Senior Hope Drake a framed 12 x 18 momento of her attendance at the 2019 National Hoop Shoot in Chicago and wished her well. Hope has volunteered at the Loundoun 2406 Local contest, the North District contest, and my Virginia Hoop Shoot since she aged out in 2020. Hope will be attending Washington University in St. Louis and playing basketball for them. Hope is also the VHSL Leader in consecutive free throws made. As of our 2024 Virginia Hoop Shoot, Hope has made 47 consecutive free throws in a varsity game breaking the all-time record for the state of Virginia! No WBB player has ever made more consecutive free throws than Hope in the entire history of VA High school basketball.**

 **Thanks a million for all my Elks Brothers and Sisters who traveled across our great Commonwealth plus locally to assist with our Virginia Hoop Shoot! All were presented certificates prior to the presentation of trophies to the contestants. Volunteers are a vital part of any organization and we LOVE our Elk volunteers. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your Virginia Hoop Shoot Director for the past 16 years! It has been an amazing ride with beautiful memories of my Elk family who have always had my back and stepped up to do any task I ask of them. Plus the contestants and their family who have made this ride enjoyable and became my extended family once they won the Virginia Hoop Shoot! Again, special thanks to my Waynesboro Elks Lodge #2270 for helping me to host our District winners and their families!**

**Lynn Rutherford-Snow, PDDGER**

**Virginia State Hoop Shoot Director**

**Southeast Central Region 10 Director**