



*Advocating the views of convenience stores, supermarkets,  
independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **PFMA awards DECA Scholarship to Downingtown STEM student**

CAMP HILL, PA (March 20, 2019) – Rahul Rao, a senior at Downingtown STEM Academy in Chester County, Pennsylvania, is the recipient of the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association’s DECA Scholarship, the organization announced this week.

Rao, 17, of Chester Springs, will receive \$1,000 to use toward his continuing studies. The Eagle Scout and Pennsylvania DECA Student of the Year plans to double major in biomedical engineering and economics with a career goal of practicing medicine.

Among Rao’s achievements are the formation of the organization *H2O for Everyone*, which aims to shine a light on the world’s water crisis through education of America’s youth population. Rao is also the founder, president, and event services organizer for Rao Event Services, which offers local functions such as concerts, large fundraisers, and cultural event services including parking and hosting.

“At a young age, Rahul is already bringing about change in the world by educating hundreds of students about the importance of water and spearheading funding for well development in water scarce nations across the globe,” PFMA President & CEO Alex Baloga said. “We are proud to award this scholarship to someone with Rao’s entrepreneurial spirit, work ethic, and desire to help others.”

DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe.

Rao spends hours each week in the summer speaking at camps and on weekends during the year for youth groups. The idea for the organization, which he is working on establishing as a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status, came to Rao after he returned from a trip to China in 2017. He was walking his dog following a rainstorm and was shocked to see neighbors running sprinklers at full blast despite the earlier deluge.

“I developed a real perspective of significant global water inaccessibility after traveling to India and China,” Rao said. “The reality is 2.4 billion people worldwide do not have access to clean drinking water. “My first-hand experiences assimilating with those societies and speaking to people in those countries was a strong period of realization, especially after seeing people my own age struggling.”

### **About PFMA**

*The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, a statewide trade association, advocates the views of nearly 800 convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors. PFMA members operate more than 3,500 stores and employ more than 200,000 Pennsylvanians. For more information on PFMA, visit [www.pfma.org](http://www.pfma.org).*

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