

Student Advocacy Hosts 26th Annual OTO Awards Virtually, Honoring The Accomplishments of Four Westchester Teens

Student Advocacy celebrates four Westchester teens who have triumphed over personal challenges and are now pursuing their unique pathways to success

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Student Advocacy will celebrate four Westchester County teens who have triumphed over personal challenges with determination and grace and are now pursuing their unique pathways to success. These young people will be honored at the 26th Annual Overcoming the Odds (OTO) Virtual Awards Celebration on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 7:30 pm E.T., streamed live: <https://studentadvocacy.net/>.



"Student Advocacy provides guidance and hope to young people who, for multiple reasons, are at risk for failing and/or dropping out of school," said Diane Rosenthal, Executive Director, Student Advocacy. "We believe that access to education transforms lives, and our team works hard to advocate for the school-based services that enable all children to fulfill their potential. The OTO Awards give recognition and voice to children who are often overlooked in our community."

Dedicated sponsors and supporters, including Goldfarb Properties, Jill and Rob Bernstein, Karen and David Blumen-thal, Loretta and Victor Kaufman, Richard and Allyson Rosenberg, and Tracy and Michael Nathanson, make this event a memorable experience for the honorees each year.

"We're thrilled to be supporting Student Advocacy's Overcoming the Odds Awards Celebration as

a Champion for Children Sponsor for the second year in a row," said Josh Goldfarb, Partner of Goldfarb Properties. "To the four amazing students being celebrated, we are proud of your achievements, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for you."

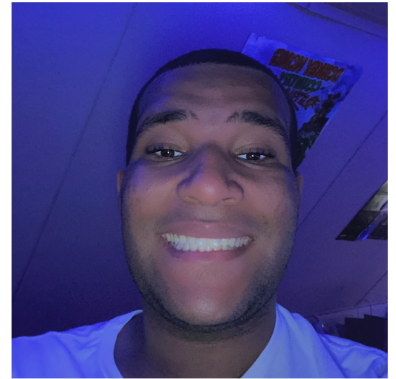
This year's honorees are:

Jared (BOCES Irvington) was diagnosed at a young age with a "mixed receptive-expressive language impairment." making it difficult to express feelings and understand language. Finding the right school placements became a challenge for Jared and his family, and that is why they reached out to Student Advocacy. With the help of his assigned Advocate, Jared received the school-based supports that addressed his communication struggles and was placed in classes that challenged him academically. Jared's dream of graduating high school with a Regents Diploma will come true in Spring 2021, and as a bonus, he recently made the honor roll.

Sissy (New Rochelle High School) experienced loss at an early age when her mother passed away and she was uprooted from the care of her loving grandmother to come to the United States. Recognizing that she would have to find her own way, Sissy learned English quickly, became a voracious reader, dedicated herself to her school work, and created strong bonds with her extended school family. Although Sissy experiences anxiety, especially when taking tests, she is proud to be graduating high school with a 91 GPA. In Fall 2021, Sissy will become the first in her family to attend college.

Julian (Greenburgh Central School District, Southern Westchester BOCES), who is affected by autism and struggles with communication, made the courageous decision not to let others define who he is or what he can accomplish. With guidance from his Advocate, he articulated his desire to receive an out-of-district placement and now participates in a full-time culinary arts program where he is pursuing his passion to become a chef. In September, Julian begins classes in the culinary arts at Westchester Community College.

Vincent (Hastings High School) experienced epileptic seizures as a child and was diagnosed with dyslexia which made reading and writing a struggle. In freshman year of high school, he received



(L-R, top row): Jared, Julian (L-R, bottom row): Sissy, Vincent

a potentially life-threatening diagnosis of having a brain tumor. Vincent made it through surgery, began physical therapy, worked his way back to attending school full time, and resumed playing hockey – the sport he loves most. Vincent will be graduating high school with a Regents Diploma this Spring and plans to attend Manhattanville College, where he will study special and physical education with the hope of becoming a teacher.

To register for this year's event or donate in support of Student Advocacy's mission, please visit www.studentadvocacy.net. For additional information about Student Advocacy, please contact Diane Rosenthal at (914) 347-7039 ext. 101 or via email at drosenthal@studentadvocacy.net.

About Student Advocacy Inc.: Student Advocacy, established in 1982, is a non-profit organization that provides legally based education advocacy services for youth who are seriously challenged and at risk of failing and/or dropping out of school. Located in Elmsford, New York, Student Advocacy serves students and their families in over 40 school districts and Special Act school districts in Westchester and Putnam counties. Student Advocacy staff of trained Advocates work to protect the educational rights of students, ages 3-21 years, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or immigration status, and to ensure they receive the school-based resources to which they are legally entitled. For more information about Student Advocacy, please visit www.studentadvocacy.net.

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