



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release  
Friday, January 16, 2026

## COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO OPENS NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE YOUTH AWARDS

*Nominations are due February 13, 2026*

**ROCHESTER, NY** — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced nominations for the Young Citizen of the Year, the Willie W. Lightfoot Youth Advocate of the Year, and the Gary Mervis Youth Team Achievement Award are open through February 13, 2026. These awards, established by the Monroe County Legislature, are one of the highest honors for youth and adult leadership, community service and advocacy in our community. The awards pay tribute to outstanding citizens who have made a local contribution toward advocacy and action.

“Monroe County is a community full of leaders whose advocacy, compassion, and talent are bettering our community,” **said County Executive Bello**. “As we look forward to the 2026 Legislative Youth Awards, I am asking our community to help us formally recognize their accomplishments. I encourage everyone to nominate a young person, a youth team or an adult advocate to be considered for these prestigious awards.”

The Young Citizen of the Year award is a high honor recognizing a youth who takes positive action in their neighborhood, school and home; exhibits strong leadership skills, provides service to our community and demonstrates care for their peers. The Willie W. Lightfoot Youth Advocate of the Year Award is a high honor for an adult who is dedicated to serving of our youth by advocating for their safety, health and success. The Monroe County Youth Team Achievement Award, is a high honor recognizing a youth team or youth group that has demonstrated exceptional community service together.

“The Monroe County Legislative Youth Awards are about more than recognition, they are about celebrating the leadership, compassion, and courage young people bring to our community every day,” **said Legislature President Yversha Román**. “Across Monroe County, young leaders are stepping up, serving others, and shaping a future rooted in care and possibility. I encourage our residents to nominate the individuals, teams, and advocates who remind us just how powerful youth leadership can be.”

“Recognizing youth for their citizenship and service to our community affirms that their efforts matter and that their voices can create real change. It builds confidence, inspires lifelong civic engagement, and shows young people that leadership begins with action,” **said Monroe County Youth Bureau Executive Director Tony Jordan**. “These recognitions provide all the fuel a young person needs to continue down the right path and eventually become a future great leader of our community and country.”

“Every day young people across our County inspire us all through their acts of service, commitment to their community, and sense of responsibility,” **said Majority Leader Michael Yudelson**. “The Monroe County Youth Awards gives us a chance to honor our County’s youth and celebrate their achievements, I encourage you to nominate a young person or youth advocate whose impacts should be recognized.”

“The service and leadership shown by our County’s youth and the adults who mentor them make a real and lasting difference in our communities every single day,” **said Republican Leader Sean McCabe**. “The Monroe County Youth Awards give us the opportunity to recognize young people and youth advocates whose selflessness, dedication, and commitment to others set an example for all of us. I encourage residents to nominate a deserving young person, youth team, or youth advocate who has gone above and beyond so we can properly recognize and celebrate their contributions to Monroe County.”

Nomination forms are available online: <https://www.monroecounty.gov/youth-award-form> and are due by February 13, 2026. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Winners and nominators will be notified with a formal invitation to the ceremony to be held on April 23, 2026.

—30—

**Media inquiries:**

**Steve Barz, Director of Communications**  
[stevebarz@MonroeCounty.gov](mailto:stevebarz@MonroeCounty.gov)  
(585) 753-1064

**Department of Communications**  
[communications@MonroeCounty.gov](mailto:communications@MonroeCounty.gov)  
(585) 753-1080