



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

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO AND COUNTY LEGISLATORS HONOR 2025 YOUTH AWARD RECIPIENTS

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello and members of the County Legislature honored the recipients of the 2025 Young Citizen of the Year and Willie W. Lightfoot Youth Advocate of the Year Awards at a ceremony held last night at Monroe Community College.

“The Monroe County Youth Awards ceremony is an important event that allows us to recognize outstanding acts of service and leadership in our community,” **said County Executive Bello**. “I take great pride in joining my partners in government as we recognize this group of youth and adults who have made a lasting impact on our community.”

For more than 30 years, the Monroe County Legislature has worked in partnership with the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau to identify and honor exceptional youth and youth advocates for their contributions to our community.

The Lightfoot Award is named for the late Willie Walker Lightfoot, who served in the County Legislature between 1978 and 2001. He also served as president of Action for a Better Community and was a founding member of the SouthWest Area Neighborhood Association. Lightfoot was known for his passion for justice and fairness, particularly for those denied opportunity by racism and structural inequality.

New this year is the Gary Mervis Youth Team Achievement Award, named in honor of Gary Mervis, an exceptional member of the Rochester community. Mervis founded Camp Good Days and Special Times Inc. to support children suffering from cancer and other life challenges. Over time, his community work expanded to include anti-violence efforts, coordinating outreach events known as TIPS in the City of Rochester and Project EXILE, a multi-agency response to the illegal gun industry.

This year, 81 youths, 18 adults, and two teams were nominated for the Youth Awards and one award was presented in each category.

The 2025 awardees are:

- Greece Athena DECA Club - The Gary Mervis Team Award
- Christopher Damon - The Willie W. Lightfoot Youth Advocate of the Year Award
- Charizma Scott - The Young Citizen of the Year Award

These awards were established by the County Legislature as one of the highest honors for youth and adult leadership, community service, advocacy and perseverance.

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Media inquiries:

Steve Barz, Director of Communications

stevebarz@MonroeCounty.gov

(585) 753-1064

**Molly Clifford, Deputy Director of
Communications**

mollyclifford@MonroeCounty.gov

(585) 469-4365