



SEPTEMBER 24, 2020 FROM 6:00PM-7:00PM

For Immediate Release

September, 10 2020

Media Contact

Hadleigh Kindberg

hkindberg@mentorkids.org

973-975-2317

Announcing 2020 Award Recipients

NEW YORK — MENTOR New York is excited to announce the five outstanding mentors from across New York State who will be recognized on September 24, 2020 during the virtual 2020 Mentor of the Year Awards. Award recipients were selected by a volunteer committee comprised of JPMorgan Chase employees who recognized the unique and powerful mentoring relationships each winning mentor shared with their mentee.

“As New York navigated a global pandemic with physical distancing and a transformation of our daily routines, mentors became the front line support for young people throughout the state. This year’s Mentor of the Year award recipients have impressed us with their dedication to maintain their relationships with their mentees during extraordinary times and lifting up their voices,” said Brenda Jimenez, CEO of MENTOR New York. “Each mentor has demonstrated they value the brilliance and uniqueness of their mentee and built a relationship centered on joy.”

Two of the five award winners are Berenice Belizaire, mentor for [Biggs & Littles NYC Mentoring](#), and Pat Banhazl, mentor for [Baldwin School District Mentoring Program](#), who both found ways to continue connecting with their mentees when the global pandemic began earlier this year.

“Mentoring is about being open-minded, supportive, adaptable, and encouraging your [mentee] to become their best self by providing the necessary guidance and resources to allow them to do so,” said mentor Berenice Belizaire.

Mentor award recipients Joe Fergus, mentor for [Connections Mentoring](#), and Erwin Howard, mentor for [Chautauqua Striders](#), agree that they learn more from their mentees than they teach.

“It’s a relationship of equals,” said mentor Erwin Howard. “I would be living a less full life [without my mentee Will]. I would be lacking the influence of a younger person that I didn’t even know I was missing.”

The final winning mentor, Cara Ginsberg from [Mentors Giving Voices Across North Babylon](#), said that seeing her mentee Bensley is her favorite thing about going to work each day.



SEPTEMBER 24, 2020 FROM 6:00PM-7:00PM

All five award recipients and their mentees will be recognized during the virtual awards ceremony and fundraiser on September 24, 2020 from 6:00PM – 7:00PM.

About the 2020 Mentor of the Year Awards

The first-ever virtual 2020 Mentor of the Year Awards presented by JPMorgan Chase is an opportunity for new and old friends to support MENTOR New York in providing services that are needed, *now more than ever*, to mentoring programs, youth development organizations and schools during the global pandemic and amid racial injustice. The event will recognize five outstanding mentors, celebrate the accomplishments of 2020, honor the vibrant life of Luke Boisi and celebrate Jean Lahage Cohen for her 25 years of service to the organization.

Corporate event sponsors include presenting sponsor JPMorgan Chase and gold-level sponsors: Bethpage Federal Credit Union, Apogee Coaching and Consulting Strategies LLC, People's United Bank, PSEG Long Island and KeyBank in partnership with First Niagara Foundation. [Learn more about the event.](#)

About MENTOR New York

For over 25 years, MENTOR New York has been the go-to resource for building sustainable and mutually-beneficial mentoring programs. MENTOR New York partners with nearly 850 mentoring programs that serve approximately 80,000 young people throughout the state. MENTOR NY is an Affiliate of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, the national nonprofit unifying and elevating the mentoring movement. For more information about mentoring programs and initiatives, visit www.mentornewyork.org.