



Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Executive

COUNTY OF ALBANY

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

YOUTH BUREAU PRESENTS THE 22ND ANNUAL:

YOUTH RECOGNITION AWARDS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2026

NOMINATIONS ARE DUE BY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026

M&T Bank ALBANY COUNTY
Cares about our youth



Each year the Albany County Department for Children, Youth and Families - Youth Bureau hosts the Youth Recognition Awards, an exciting initiative that recognizes youth who have overcome adversity, shown tremendous resiliency and growth, athletic achievement, artistic expression or demonstrated their citizenship and civic engagement through community service. The Albany County Department for Children, Youth and Families - Youth Bureau initiated this program in 2003 to celebrate youth that would not ordinarily be recognized. This program is an opportunity to honor the positive achievements of those youth. Last year's program was a great success and I anticipate that this year's program will be even better. Five Albany County middle school and five high school students will be recognized and awarded in different achievement categories.

The award categories are:

Most Improved Student

Artistic Expression

Lt. John F. Finn Community Service

Ed Roche Outstanding Youth

George Roe Athletic Achievement

You will find additional information about the awards program and nominating process in this packet. Please feel free to distribute this information to individuals who can identify and nominate youth for these awards.

Nomination forms are also available online at:

www.albanycounty.com/youthbureau

This year's ceremony will take place on
Wednesday, June 10, 2026 - 5:00pm
at St. Anne's Institute in Albany.

Nominations are due by **Wednesday, April 22, 2026**

For more information or further questions please contact:
Valerie Johnson, Executive Director, Albany County Youth Bureau
Valerie.johnson@albanycountyny.gov
(518) 447-3053

Award Categories & Criteria

Please note youth nominated must be residents of Albany County.

Only individual nominees, no group nominations.

Most Improved Student

CRITERIA- To be eligible for the award:

Raised grade point average

Fewer Disciplinary Infractions

Displays school pride

Improved Peer Relations and Teacher Respect

Met classroom expectations (Improved attendance when attendance has been a concern)

Lt. John F. Finn Community Service

CRITERIA- To be eligible for the award:

Demonstrate a contribution made through volunteering/service outside of one school

Demonstrate a high degree of positive impact within one's community

Ed Roche Outstanding Youth

CRITERIA- To be eligible for the award:

Uphold high standards of accountability, transparency and ethical behavior

Effectively delegate responsibility and encourage growth and leadership in others

Willingly share knowledge and support others

Inspire others

Be an excellent agent for change

Foster team development

Lead by example

Respect others and earn the respect of others

Artistic Expression

CRITERIA- To be eligible for the award:

Compelling and innovative scholar of the creative arts (dance, music, theater, visual and literary arts)

Exhibits artistic ability that is impressive in creativity, originality and technique

Demonstrates technical proficiency

Displays exceptional ability, determination and stamina in the creative arts as they overcome significant life changes and/or obstacles

Demonstrates concern for problems that youth face through personal exploration, expression and performance

Uses art as a vehicle to impact the community by addressing social issues

George Roe Athletic Achievement

CRITERIA- To be eligible for the award:

Leadership

Team work

Commitment and Loyalty

Ambassadorship – Good representative of the sport, and of the school.

Respect for coach, teammates, opponents and officials

Fair play/ Honor

Sportsmanship

Recognition of the need for a balance between academic and sporting life

2026 Youth Recognition Award - Nomination Form

Name of Nominee: _____

☐ Male ☐ Female Age: _____ School/Grade: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

School Attending: _____

Youth Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

☐ Yes, students photo may be taken and used in county publications.

☐ No, students photo may not be used in county publications.

Name of Nominator (please print): _____

Organization/School (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Relationship to Nominee: _____

Nominator Signature

Nomination Categories

Middle School Youth High School Youth

Most Improved Student: ☐ ☐

Artistic Expression (example required): ☐ ☐

John F. Finn Community Service: ☐ ☐

Ed Roche Outstanding Youth: ☐ ☐

George Roe Athletic Achievement: ☐ ☐

Please return nomination forms by April 29, 2025 to:
Valerie Johnson 112 State St., Room 300, Albany, NY 12207
Valerie.johnson@albanycountyny.gov Fax (518) 447-7578

Tell us about the Nominee

Your Shining Star

Please include the name of the nominee, the award category and date at the top of the nomination.

Also include your name and contact information on the nomination letter.

We are seeking to honor shining stars. Shining stars are youth that have pushed themselves to achieve their personal best despite being discounted and forgotten. These youth possess the tenacity and determination necessary to defy the odds by triumphing over adversity and hurdling over the obstacles that have hindered their success.

In a brief essay (in 300 words or less), celebrate your shining star. Explain why this youth should be nominated for an award. Specific examples of positive youth development, actions and achievements on the part of the youth that reflect the qualities of the award category he or she is being nominated for should be included.

Please provide enough information so that the reviewers will have a clear picture of the nominee's accomplishments pertaining to the category you have nominated them under. We have found that it is important to hear directly from those who are familiar with the nominee's work and efforts, so please feel free to include up to 3 letters of support/recommendation from others who are familiar with the nominee's activities, or who may have benefitted from involvement with the nominee. **For Artistic Expression, please remember to submit a sample of the nominee's sketches, poetry, essays, photos, dance, theatre or music with the nomination.** These items will be returned to the nominee upon request.

Please return nomination forms by April 22, 2026 to:
Valerie Johnson 112 State St., Room 300, Albany, NY 12207
Valerie.johnson@albanycountyny.gov Fax (518) 447-7578

Sample

2026 Youth Recognition Awards
Ed Roche Outstanding Youth Award
May 5, 2026

██████████ has overcome more adversity in his sixteen years than anyone should have to in an entire life-time. His grandmother passed when he was three, followed by his mother at just four years old. ██████████ then lived with his father in Rhode Island until his father was sent to prison, just after the Christmas holiday, where he is still serving his sentence. ██████████ two older brothers who are also in the system and he strives to break the pattern. He then moved in with a relative in Rhode Island for a brief time before making the move to New York to live with his Aunt ██████████. Last year ██████████ eldest half-brother, who he was close with, passed away suddenly. The most amazing thing about ██████████ that he has every right to be mad at the world but he goes about his days with a big infectious smile on his face. On my worst days, ██████████ always makes me laugh and smile.

██████████ has grown leaps and bounds in his sophomore year in terms of maturity and academic effort. He is taking his school work more seriously, studying, completing his homework, and excelling in some areas. ██████████ always demonstrates respect for himself and other around him as well as school property. In the sports and entertainment course we completed a yearlong project in which ██████████ frequently took the lead within his group. It was very impressive to see a freshman take charge, assign tasks and make sure that all objectives were completed.

██████████ has also been involved with the ██████████ Youth Court where he served as a youth juror in cases involving minors. He has also been active in the World of Difference club in a project to send decommissioned stars from the American flag to veterans. He is a member of the indoor track team as a hurdler and sprinter. He assists immensely at home by babysitting younger cousins, doing household chores and helping his uncle with his ██████████ business. ██████████ also helps out neighbors by mowing lawns in the summer and shoveling driveways/sidewalks in the winter.

██████████ would go out of his way to help his classmates, friends, family and teachers. He uses the adversity he has faced to help his friends who are going through tough times. He knows just what to say and how to act to help them feel better. I am so very proud of ██████████ and the individual he is becoming.

Respectfully submitted,

████████████████████
Business Education Teacher
██████████ High School