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**2022 Monroe County 4-H Participants Honored with Youth Bureau
Recognition
Exemplary service to the community**

On June 15, 2022, outstanding Monroe County citizens were honored at the Roger Robach Community Center in Ontario Beach Park. Monroe County Legislators and the Monroe County Youth Bureau Director gathered to acknowledge the outstanding recipients. The Young Citizen of the Year and Willie W. Lightfoot Youth Advocate of the Year Awards represent two of the highest honors for youth and adult leadership, community service, advocacy and perseverance. These awards pay tribute to outstanding citizens who exhibit remarkable leadership, perform extraordinary acts on behalf of others, or have served as a role model for youth advocacy.

Two youth and one adult volunteer from the Monroe County 4-H program were recognized for their impact on and advocacy for the youth in the community. The 4-H Program, offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, encourages youth to engage in hands-on activities and opportunities that encourage the development of life skills. This experiential learning helps to build leadership skills, including public speaking, personal development, decision-making, self-management, and citizenship. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive and inclusive environment led by caring adults dedicated to providing 4-H youth with the positive experiences they need to become tomorrow's leaders.

Janessa Parnell is a member of the 4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) program at Agape Haven of Abundance in the Maplewood-Edgerton neighborhood of Rochester. Parnell was honored for her nomination as a Youth Citizen of the Year. An honor roll member at school as well as an active participant in the robotics club, her

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dedication extends beyond school to the community. At Agape, she frequently steps up to act as a leader for younger youth and is always ready to jump in when community members have questions. She has helped with planting flowers, painting fences and decorating birdhouses to beautify the community space at AGAPE, as well as preparing and tending the community garden and making gingerbread house kits to distribute to youth in the community. At 4-H UNITY, Janessa has been working on a video project to share a message of anti-violence with her community.

Kenya Bradwell is a student at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School and part of Ibero-American Action League's Aspira mentoring program's 4-H UNITY group. Bradwell was recognized as a nominee for the Youth Citizen of the Year in Monroe County. Within her school community, she is the secretary of the student council. A visionary for community change and powerful advocate for her peers, Kenya has enhanced the value of 4-H UNITY service projects through her hard work and charismatic personality. She has participated in the Ibero Coat Giveaway, making toys for the Verona Street Animal Shelter, writing Positive Post-It notes and painting Kindness Rocks to encourage her school and the community.

Jessie Chandler is the Assistant Director of Friendship Children's Center, a not-for-profit after-school program where she has worked tirelessly for fifteen years, including providing service throughout the pandemic as youths' supportive adults continued work as essential workers. Chandler was recognized with the special distinction as the 2022 Youth Advocate of the Year. She has worked to have the full Friendship Team trained in CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Childhood Health) to support youth, made Friendship Children's Center a welcoming place for Urban Fellows, college interns, and Americorps VISTAs to deliver programming, and works with the Cornell Cooperative Extension SNAP-Ed team to support youth and families. As a 4-H volunteer, Jessie has offered mindfulness and agricultural literacy programming to the youth at the center, supported the youth in having their 4-H projects displayed at the 4-H project showcase at the Strong Museum, and helped to facilitate healthy living camp days where youth were empowered with skills to make healthier choices.

4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) is part of the Children, Youth and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Program. The project is supported by Smith Lever funds, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, New York State 4-H and Cornell University. 4-H UNITY is conducted in Endicott and Rochester by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Broome County and CCE of Monroe County in close partnership with New York State 4-H, Cornell University.

The Monroe County 4-H Program is offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension to the youth of Monroe County. 4-H is a worldwide youth development program open to all youth aged 5-to-19, who want to have fun, learn new skills, and explore the world. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive environment and opportunities for hands-on or "experiential" learning about things that interest them.

Learn more about 4-H at <http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth-development>.



Janessa Parnell and Kenya Bradwell are recognized as Youth Citizen of the Year nominees.
Jessie Chandler is honored as Youth Advocate of the Year.

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