

Neighbor to Neighbor 2025 Committee

John Del Vecchio

Anita Fiorillo

Aledra Floyd

LaDreamer Lark

Susane Lee

Roberta Semer

Rob Sweren

Goddard Riverside Staff

Beth Dunphe, *Chief Resource Officer*

Nelly Gomez, *Communications & Brand Coordinator*

Elizabeth Kennedy, *Director of Events and Corporate Partnerships*

Susan Matloff-Nieves, *VP for Innovation and Justice*

Maggie Simon, *Intern, MSW Intern, Fordham University*

LaKisha Williams, *Director of #DegreesNYC*

Larry Wood, *Director of Advocacy and Organizing*

Goddard Riverside

INVESTING IN PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

593 Columbus Avenue, New York, NY 10024

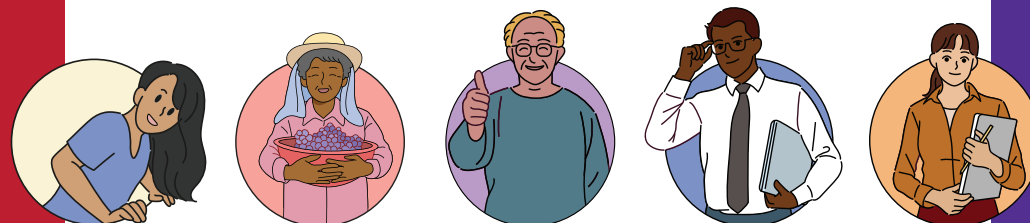
(212) 873-6600 • www.goddard.org

Goddard Riverside

INVESTING IN PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Presenting the Good Neighbor Award

Neighbor to Neighbor Awards Ceremony



June 16, 2025

Celebrating those who are
creating a better community!



Past Winners

Visit our website for past winners.

www.goddard.org/goodneighborawards



Scan the QR code above to be taken directly to the web page!

To scan the QR code, open up your cell phones camera and hover over the QR code. Click the popup that appears.

Program

Reception	5:30 PM
Emcee	Larry Wood
Welcoming Remarks	Andrea Cain Lawson <i>Chief Operating Officer</i>
Remarks	Larry Wood

Presentation of Awards

Awardee(s)	Presenter
John Mudd	Emma Embleton
Sharon Tyson	Merle Bush
Altagracia Martinez Valdez	Katherine Hiraldo
Cheri Leon	Amanda Ostuni
Shaen Begleiter	Julian Kuellmer
Roberta Bessey	Lori Klamner

For more than 100 years, Goddard Riverside has been committed to investing in people and strengthening community by meeting New Yorkers' most essential needs. Goddard Riverside provides comprehensive educational, cultural and recreational programs for New Yorker of all ages, including early childhood education, after school, employment support, college access, youth programs, homeless outreach, senior centers and legal assistance.

Preparing Children and Youth for Success

The goal of this program area is for children and youth to thrive, contribute positively, and successfully prepare for the next stages in their lives. This includes Early Childhood Education Centers, Afterschool Programs, Summer Day Camps, Beacon Programs, Star Learning Center, and the COFA Program.

Supporting Self-Sufficiency and Financial Independence

We work to help young adults secure education and employment opportunities toward meaningful career pathways. This includes Options Center, Options Institute, Learning to Work, Advance and Earn, and sector-based career training.

Enriching the Lives of Older Adults

Goddard Riverside is committed to helping older adults experience an optimal quality of life. This includes Older Adult Centers, NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community), Phelps House, and Meals on Wheels.

Promoting Behavioral Health and Wellness

The goal of these programs is for each person to maximize their individual abilities and reach their fullest potential. This includes the ACT Team, Youth ACT Team, TOP Clubhouse, TOP Opportunities and Green Keepers.

Fighting Homelessness and Supporting Housing for All

We believe all New Yorkers must have stable and affordable housing. We conduct homelessness prevention work and manage Supportive Housing. This includes Homeless Outreach, The Baxter Safe Haven, Capitol Hall, The Senate Residence, West 140th Street, Corner House, transitional housing, and the Law Project.

Strengthening Families & Communities

These programs support families and communities to be self-directed and thriving. This includes Community Arts, the Resource Center as well as Advocacy and Community Organizing.

For more detailed information on all our programs, please visit us at www.goddard.org.

Upcoming Events

You're invited to the

ISAACS CENTER COMMUNITY DAY

A CELEBRATION OF TOGETHERNESS, CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY!

Location:
Inside the Isaacs Center
415 E 93rd St, NY, NY 10128

**JUNE 18, 2025
1-4PM**

Crafts, Games, Food, & More!

RSVPs Encouraged, not required.
Scan the QR code or visit:
isaacscenter.org/communityday

Goddard
Riverside

Isaacs
Center

Good Neighbor Awards 2025

The Good Neighbor Awards are being presented to the following in recognition of their extraordinary work as volunteers in helping build a better community.

Shaen Begleiter for his decades of dedicated leadership of the West 68th Street Block Association. As president in 1998 and again from 2014 onward, Shaen led a reorganization to form a steering committee that reflects all segments of the block, ensuring inclusive decision-making. He also spearheaded the “Rat Pack” rodent control initiative and transformed tree pit plantings with raised beds and rodent-resistant designs. During Covid, he kept the corner produce stand open and co-created a neighborhood hub for resources, support, and health guidance. Known by many as the “Mayor of 68th Street,” Shaen has helped build a more connected, beautiful, and responsive community, exemplifying the vital, often overlooked role of block associations.

Roberta Bessey for her 20 years of dedicated stewardship as “Tender” from 74th to 79th Streets in Riverside Park, tirelessly maintaining and beautifying this well-used area through daily care like planting, mulching, watering, and weeding. Her self-taught gardening expertise and commitment have created year-round beauty and fostered community respect for the park. As a retired nurse, her nurturing spirit is reflected in her work and inspires others to carry on her lasting legacy.

Cheri Leon for her vital role in a volunteer group supporting unhoused neighbors in Washington Square Park, and especially for her dedication to a resident who spent over a year experiencing homelessness in Father Fagan Park. Cheri showed up regularly, bringing food, blankets, and supplies, washing clothes, tending to wounds, and defending and advocating for her rights. Her genuine friendship and tireless support were instrumental in that resident’s transition into housing, and her ongoing compassion has made a meaningful difference in the lives of many others.



John Mudd for his leadership of the Midtown South Community Council, mobilizing partnerships and community power to address health, hunger, and housing. Through initiatives like the urban garden, distribution of farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, and “Street Sheets,” John finds creative, collaborative ways to provide tangible resources. Additionally, his hosting of ongoing forums, panels, and events, uplifts the unique ways people contribute to the community, bringing people together to have critical discussions and advocate for a more equitable New York City.

Sharon Tyson for her unwavering dedication to feeding, comforting, and caring for her community across Sugar Hill and beyond. Whether preparing hot meals overnight for 400 mourners on just two days’ notice or opening her home to those in need, Sharon shows up energetically again and again. A mother of six and caregiver to her 90-year-old mother, she cooks for churches across boroughs, supports grieving families (even traveling to those out of state), and handles final arrangements for neighbors with compassion and grace.

Altagracia Martinez Valdez for her years of dedicated service through Dominican Community Services NYC, Inc., fostering a stronger, more connected neighborhood. From free ESL and Citizenship classes to cultural events that celebrate Dominican heritage, she consistently offers resources that open doors and bring people together. Additionally, her beloved Prom Dress Giveaway ensures students feel confident and celebrated, and neighbors regularly turn to her for help with housing or domestic challenges. Altagracia’s ability to bring people together, create solutions, and uplift others has left an indelible mark on our community.