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2025 Human Rights Award

Presented to Autumn Terrill in Rye

By Hanadi Zakour

The City of Rye Human Rights Commission proudly presented the 2025 Human Rights Award to Autumn Terrill in recognition of her outstanding commitment to fostering inclusion, compassion, and community connection throughout Rye. Nominations were solicited from the community for an individual or organization whose efforts made an important contribution to fostering human rights and strengthening relationships within Rye, and Terrill's work stood out as a powerful example of those values in action.

Autumn Terrill, founder and owner of Give Good Parties, built her Rye-based event planning company on a simple but powerful belief: that a great party has the power to change lives. Her inspiration came from her younger brother Adam, a 44-year-old man with developmental disabilities living in their hometown of Cedar Falls, Iowa. Watching Adam navigate the difficult transition from school programs into adulthood, Terrill recognized a gap that too many individuals face: the lack of meaningful employment, real job training, and the dignity that comes from contributing and taking pride in one's work.

Rather than accept that reality, she chose to create change.

Through Give Good Parties, Terrill hires, trains, and fairly compensates differently abled young adults, taking the time to understand each person's strengths and build roles that allow them to succeed. Her approach is thoughtful, intentional, and deeply rooted in the belief that inclusion should not be an afterthought, but a foundation.

Several members of her team joined the celebration, including TJ, known as The Candy Man, Thomas, The Smooth Operator, and Emma, affectionately called The Cookie Boss. Their presence reflected the heart of Terrill's work and the meaningful opportunities she continues to create.

Terrill's impact extends beyond her business. She serves on the boards of the Rye Youth Council and the New Canaan Mounted Troop, an organization that provides leadership and therapeutic programming for individuals in need. She also helped launch Pitch Your Peers in Westchester, a movement empowering women in philanthropy to fund initiatives that create meaningful change in their communities.

Members of the Human Rights Commission highlighted Terrill's ability to bring people together across backgrounds and perspectives. Her work reflects a deep belief that strong communities are built through empathy, understanding, and active participation. Whether supporting local initiatives, encouraging thoughtful dialogue, or helping neighbors feel seen and valued, Terrill consistently demonstrates what it means to lead with purpose and heart.

What Terrill has built is rare. She has created a for profit business that treats inclusion not as a footnote, but as its foundation. Her work serves as a powerful reminder that commerce and compassion do not just coexist, they strengthen one another.

During the presentation, commissioners shared a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that captured the spirit of Terrill's work: "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

The message resonated deeply with those in attendance, as community members expressed gratitude for Terrill's leadership and the positive ripple effect of her contributions. Her dedication continues to strengthen the fabric of Rye and inspire others to lead with compassion and purpose.

Nominations are now open for the Rye Human Rights Commission Youth Award. If you know an exceptional young person, please nominate them.