



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

## 4.17.20 - Senator Fred Akshar continues “Akshar's All-Stars” student recognition program online despite statewide coronavirus shutdown

FRED AKSHAR April 17, 2020

| ISSUE: **AKSHAR'S ALL-STARS**



Senator Fred Akshar found a way to continue his third year of the district-wide “Akshar's All-Stars” student recognition program despite the ongoing school closures and shutdowns due to the coronavirus public health crisis.

Previously, Senator Akshar had traveled to each school to recognize local students selected

by their school districts in the 52nd Senate District who have shown great leadership, compassion, school spirit or improvement amongst their peers.

With schools closed through at least May 15 as part of the sweeping “New York State on Pause” shutdown, Akshar worked with local school districts to utilize live Zoom meetings with students and their families to publicly recognize their accomplishments.

“I wish I could be there to congratulate each of these amazing students personally, but as we all adjust to these difficult circumstances, it’s important that we continue to shine a light on all the good work these All-Stars have done and celebrate their service to others and the examples they set for their peers,” said Senator Fred Akshar.

Today, Senator Akshar recognized 10th grader **Kristopher Hodge from Union-Endicott’s Tiger Ventures** and 5th grader **Jewel Belokur from Apalachin Elementary School**.

U-E Tiger Ventures student **Kristopher Hodge** was recognized for his tremendous work ethic that has made him an exemplary student. Since joining the Tiger Ventures school, Kris became a driving force in repurposing discarded wood to construct various crafts and decorations. He then helped lead the effort in setting up a craft fair to sell his school’s creations, with the proceeds being donated to CHOW.

“Kris has been one of the best examples of how Tiger Ventures’ unique approach to education can help students thrive,” said Tiger Ventures Principal Mary Mullock. “Here, he discovered his talent for wood working and utilized his creative vision to transform items like scrap wood into beautiful projects. Even though he’s a quiet guy, we are so proud of the leader he’s become both in and out of the classroom in such a short time.”

Apalachin Elementary student **Jewel Belokur** was recognized for her emphatic and helpful nature in both social and academic settings, always being one of the first to volunteer to assist both her peers or adults in nearly every situation.

“Jewel is a great kid with a great heart,” said Apalachin Elementary School teacher Mrs. Therese Hans. “She’s a genuine leader in all the little things she does every day that some kids her age overlook. She’s a true advocate for other people. Not every kid has the courage to speak up for other kids, but she does. She always puts other kids before herself and always goes above and beyond in her school work.”

“All of us want this to be over as soon as possible and we all want our kids to be able to return to school,” said Akshar. “But we’re all just trying to make the best decisions we can to keep everyone safe until then. While we may have to do things differently for now, it doesn’t change the fact that our community’s outstanding students deserve to be recognized and celebrated. I’m glad we were able to still make that happen today.”

When asked to offer advice to other students in the community on how to pass the time at home during this pandemic, Akshar’s All-Star Jewel Belokur replied, “If you’re down, just keep smiling, that’s what I do. Just gotta put a smile on your face and it will turn around your mood.”