



Irma Rivera Center at Christina Seix Academy receives NJAAW's 2024 Carl F. West Award

The Irma Rivera Center demonstrates the value of intergenerational relationships and community-building, which reflects NJAAW's vision of an age-inclusive society.

HAMILTON, NJ — May 2, 2024. [NJ Advocates for Aging Well](#) (NJAAW), the only statewide nonprofit focusing solely on issues impacting older adults in New Jersey, has named the Irma Rivera Center at Christina Seix Academy winner of its 2024 Carl F. West Award for Excellence in Aging.

“We are impressed and inspired by the work Christina Seix Academy does to support families,” particularly when it comes to grandparents raising grandchildren,” said Dr. Cathy Rowe, Executive Director, NJAAW. “We hope other organizations will adopt similar intergenerational approaches that help NJ residents of all ages flourish.”

The Christina Seix Academy, located in Trenton, NJ, serves students from Pre-K through eighth grade from historically marginalized backgrounds, offering full scholarships to all admitted families. The Irma River Center (IRC) was established to strengthen relationships between parents and caregivers, their children, and the school community. The IRC's advocacy and education efforts also provide a wealth of practical resources that strengthen families' home lives, which is shown to correlate with student achievement.

“Winning the 2024 Carl F. West Award for Excellence in Aging from NJ Advocates for Aging Well is an incredible honor and validation of our commitment to supporting families, especially grandparents raising grandchildren,” said Magaly De Jesus, Director of the Irma Rivera Center at Christina Seix Academy. “This award represents the culmination of our efforts to strengthen relationships within our school community and provide practical resources that enhance family life and student achievement. We are deeply grateful for this recognition and hope to inspire other organizations to adopt similar intergenerational approaches. This award reaffirms our dedication to inclusivity and serving older adults within our community.”

The IRC's work caught the attention of NJAAW Board member Dr. Charisse Smith, niece of the award's namesake, Carl F. West. “When selecting our winner each year, we seek out those who champion inclusivity with the same fervor that Carl demonstrated throughout his career,” Dr.

Smith said. “We see that dedication reflected in the Irma Rivera Center’s work, and commend them on the ways they include and serve the older adults in their school community.”

This year’s award will be presented on May 17 at the NJAAW Annual Conference, titled “Dare to Envision.” The conference brings together professionals in the field of aging, thought leaders, and government officials to discuss issues affecting older adults. The event attracts hundreds of attendees, and record-breaking attendance is expected this year.

Steve Leone, NJAAW Board Member, added: “Having witnessed the evolution of the program, we at NJAAW have seen how much can be accomplished when older adults are integrated within a community in support of a single mission. We send our thanks and congratulations to the Irma Rivera Center at Christina Seix Academy for advancing the goal of an age-friendly society.”

Previous award recipients include Marilyn Mock, Policy Director for Wellness Services at Fair Share Support Services (2023), Elizabeth Davis, Executive Director of Brightside Family (2022), and Jespy House (2021).

For more information on NJAAW’s work, events, and more, visit www.njaaw.org.

About NJAAW

[NJ Advocates for Aging Well](#) (NJAAW), formerly NJ Foundation for Aging, has been on the forefront of revolutionizing the aging experience since 1998. It is the only statewide nonprofit focused solely on providing leadership in public policy and education to enable older adults to live with independence and dignity in their communities. NJAAW’s social action issues include senior housing and hunger, elder economic security, older workers, the direct care workforce, and transportation. The award-winning Aging Insights, a monthly topical TV program and podcast produced by NJAAW, connects caregivers, seniors and their families to community based services and resources. The show is available on [YouTube](#), NJAAW’s website and on more than 70 public access TV stations. NJAAW also presents educational forums and an Annual Conference offering development opportunities and best practices for professionals entrusted with caring for seniors.

About Christina Seix Academy

[Christina Seix Academy](#) is an innovative Pre-K 3 - 8th grade independent school in Trenton, New Jersey committed to empowering extraordinary young people to grow "From Potential to Achievement" by ensuring their voice is heard, acknowledged and affirmed. We prepare students to succeed in highly selective independent schools, which in turn provides them with rigorous academic development and access to a vast array of experiences, resources, and networks. We value the power of parent partnership and believe that families are an integral part of the infrastructure that enables a child to achieve.