



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Jennyrae Brongo

Jennyrae Brongo is the heart and soul of Homesteads for Hope, a nonprofit dedicated to providing families like her own with a genuine sense of belonging.

A resident of Ogden, Ms. Brongo has made it her mission to offer a place for individuals and families with and without disabilities to learn, work, live, and grow in nature's classroom. Homesteads for Hope's beautiful 55-acre farm is located 10 minutes west of downtown Rochester, directly on the wide waters of the historic Erie Canal. Its classroom provides a peaceful and therapeutic environment. In the past several years, Ms. Brongo has built a series of programs, classes, and social events that bring people together and provide a sense of community.

During a 2018 TEDx presentation, Ms. Brongo said, "I don't know where I would be without autism. It's like someone gave me a mission in life to be a voice for those who didn't have one. My brother, Chucky, is a nonverbal hero. His story is paving the way."

Homesteads for Hope founders Luann and Jennyrae Brongo felt hopeless trying to find services for Charles "Chucky" Brongo after he graduated from the school system at age 21. Despite unwavering advocacy and a relentless search for options, the family was not able to secure the assistance and support they needed. They spent endless days and nights praying for a miracle.

One day, Ms. Brongo and Chucky went to "Uncle Bob's" farm down the street. Adventuring around the canalside farm, she did a quick search of "farms for autism" and realized there were hundreds of care farms and intentional communities across the country. That evening, the Brongos started dreaming of a better future for their family. Luann worked with Chucky on the farm, and Ms. Brongo did the business planning to create the first working farm and housing community for people with disabilities in New York State.

With a Bachelor's degree in Construction Management Engineering from Alfred State College and 15 years of entrepreneurship, Ms. Brongo turned vision into reality with the development of Western New York's first inclusive "Learn, Work & Live" intentional community. In 2021, Ms. Brongo was named a "Woman of Excellence" honoree by the *Rochester Business Journal*. Her true joy lies in constructing dreams for a better future for all families.

***Jennyrae Brongo was selected as a
2025 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Robert G. Ort***

