



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Raisa Chernina

Raisa Chernina is Founder and Executive Director of Be Proud Inc. (BPI). BPI is a New York City-based not-for-profit organization that works primarily with Brooklyn's Russian-speaking communities. BPI aims to support community residents and send a message of peace and acceptance to people of all ages and backgrounds, promoting pride in heritage, and nurturing love and support throughout the community.

As BPI's Founder and Executive Director, Ms. Chernina has organized and produced various events to honor successful Russian Americans. In May 2001, BPI presented the First Annual Russian Day with the New York City Council. Since that year, BPI has been celebrating and honoring individuals who have positively influenced the community and made invaluable social and economic contributions.

Since 2003, with Ms. Chernina at the helm, BPI has coordinated "Operation Holiday Greetings," an event during which – with the help of community members, local elected officials and families of military service members – BPI sends parcels overseas for active service members. In 2005, with the assistance of the NYC Council, BPI had a leading role in co-naming a Brooklyn street "Heroes of Operation Iraqi Freedom Way." This is the first time in U.S. history that a street was named in tribute to fighting military men and women during wartime.

In 2015, BPI, in conjunction with the NYPD, instituted a program called "Community Against Drugs," a free drug prevention program for children and parents, which also offers lectures on topics including elder abuse and prescription drug precautions for the elderly.

BPI also hosts an annual event called "Yad B'Yad," the Hebrew phrase for "hand in hand." This event is designed to meet some of the basic needs of Brooklyn's most distressed Jewish populations during the Jewish holiday Rosh Hashanah – Holocaust survivors, WWII veterans and senior citizens. Last holiday season, families in need were provided with 100 wholesome Kosher food baskets.

BPI, under the leadership of Ms. Chernina, will continue developing its former initiatives and begin working on new ones. Its goal is to remain loyal to its moral values, and continue promoting respect for all traditions and cultures across Brooklyn, New York City, and the United States.

***Raisa Chernina was selected as a 2023 Women of Distinction honoree
by Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton***

