



# Women of DISTINCTION

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## HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

### *Grace VanderWaal*

Grace VanderWaal is a singer-songwriter from Suffern, New York who has loved music from an early age. She began singing and making up songs at the age of three, originally finding inspiration by watching movies and imagining what a character was feeling. At 11, she purchased a ukulele and taught herself to play watching YouTube. As a creative outlet for her original songs and covers, Ms. VanderWaal started her own YouTube channel and performed at open mics.

Ms. VanderWaal skyrocketed to stardom when she received the Golden Buzzer on NBC's America's Got Talent (AGT), advancing directly to the live shows. In 2016, at age 12, she won AGT's million-dollar prize by singing her original songs accompanied by her ukulele.

In December 2016, Ms. VanderWaal released her first EP, *Perfectly Imperfect*. She has performed in Las Vegas, Madison Square Garden, The Special Olympics World Winter Games, benefit concerts, music festivals and talk shows. She won the 2017 Radio Disney Music Award for Best New Artist, a Teen Choice Award, Billboard's 21 Under 21 (2016–2018), received the 2017 Billboard Women in Music Rising Star Award, and is the youngest person ever included in Forbes' 30 Under 30 Music List.

Despite Ms. VanderWaal's early success, she has never forgotten the importance of giving back to the community. When she learned of music program cuts to the East Ramapo School District, she contacted Senator David Carlucci and asked how she could help. With funding secured by Senator Carlucci and Ms. VanderWaal's AGT winnings, they worked with Superintendent Dr. Deborah Wortham to form The Little Miracles Choir. Ms. VanderWaal was able to collaborate with companies to get donations of instruments, amplifiers, microphones, and even her signature ukulele. From this local start, "Little Miracles" will expand to other school districts across the country to ensure the gift of music for all.

In addition to equipment, Ms. VanderWaal is providing two college scholarships in affected districts for high school seniors who want to pursue music at the next level. She lives by the motto that "to not have those opportunities to explore the creative side of yourself... it's not fair for the kids to grow up like that."

***Grace VanderWaal was selected as a  
2019 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator David Carlucci.***

