

The New York Times

New York Today: Nominating Your Neighbors

By ALEXANDRA S. LEVINE DEC. 4, 2017

Good morning on this magnificent Monday.

It's the time of year for coming together and helping those in need.

There are some New Yorkers, though, who do that year-round.

Each December, for New York Today's New Yorkers of the Year contest, we ask readers to share the stories of exemplary citizens who have made a difference in our city, in ways big or small, over the last twelve months.

Among those we met in 2016: A female firefighter leading the Fire Department's effort to recruit more women; an ovarian cancer survivor helping others in the battle; an English teacher working with children who have spent time in foster care or jail; a lawyer supporting refugees and immigrants; and a psychologist improving the tense relationship between the police and teenagers.

You can nominate someone for this year's New Yorkers of the Year at the bottom of today's column. To help get you thinking of candidates, we asked past honorees what they think is important to be a great New Yorker.

What makes a model New Yorker?

"People who lack the company titles or the political positions to generate changes, but are still committed to and successful in improving the lives of the people in our city through their existence and daily work," said Luis Mancheno, the lawyer.

"Someone who appreciates the diversity of our city, but not in a trite or calculated way,"

said Lenora B. Fulani, the psychologist.

"Appreciating the diversity of our city means that we have rich and poor, elites and regular folks, celebrities and welfare moms, and that this city belongs to all of us."

What qualities come to mind?

"The quality that makes for a New Yorker of the Year is to see a need and, ignoring the obstacles, forge ahead to try and fill that need," said Valerie Goldfein, the women's health advocate.

"Hardworking, considerate, generous of their time and financial offerings," said Jackie-Michelle Martinez, the firefighter.

"A wonderful quality of the best New Yorkers is that we feel like the city is our own and treat it as such," said Lee Gabay, the teacher. "We are protective of it and supportive and very encouraging of those who share in our love of the city and its people."

Which standout people or groups are, in your eyes, New York Today's New Yorkers of the Year?

Tell us by filling out the form below by Friday, Dec. 8.

These could be locals who have in some way shaped the city, started dialogue, inspired their communities or put others first in challenging situations. We ask that you look beyond your immediate family and close friends in the nomination, but please, encourage loved ones and neighbors to participate.



Lee Gabay, a teacher who was one of our "New Yorkers of the Year" in 2016
Credit Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times