

## **Rising Star Nomination**

From: Co-Sponsor, Jesse Bell

Nominee: Jamie Moore

I am honored to nominate Jamie Moore for the Rising Star award for their exceptional contributions to mental health support in his role as Athletic Director at Bellcate School. Bellcate School is a Vermont State approved independent therapeutic school serving youth with high support needs.. As an early-career professional, Jamie has consistently demonstrated unwavering passion, commitment, and dedication to improving the lives of individuals who often feel marginalized, disenfranchised, or disconnected from mainstream support systems.

Jamie has focused on empowering individuals to develop a deep sense of belonging and build stronger connections with their community. He recognizes that social isolation is a significant barrier to mental well-being, and his approach focuses on reducing this isolation by fostering a supportive, inclusive environment where students can thrive.

Jamie is skilled at creating safe spaces where students feel heard, respected, and validated. By providing consistent, compassionate support, Jamie enables individuals to share their stories, advocate for their needs, and develop resilience. Through peer support networks and community outreach initiatives, he works to bridge the gaps that exist for marginalized populations, including those from low-income backgrounds, trauma background, racial minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, and individuals facing homelessness or other forms of systemic oppression.

One of the standout aspects of Jaime's work is their ability to reduce social isolation through innovative initiatives. He organizes community-building programs that foster connections and solidarity among participants. These programs have been particularly impactful, providing a sense of hope and purpose to those who may have previously felt disconnected or abandoned.

One of the key areas where Jamie excels is in organizing community sporting events that are specifically designed to be accessible to youth with disabilities. These events are not only about promoting physical activity but also about fostering a sense of belonging. Through these sports programs, Jamie ensures that youth with disabilities can participate alongside their peers in unified sport; breaking down barriers and building meaningful connections between all participants, regardless of ability. These programs help promote inclusivity, teamwork, and understanding, which are critical values that help youth grow both physically and socially.

In addition to sporting events, Jamie has developed lunch groups for youth with disabilities outside of the school calendar, creating a social space where they can gather, share meals, and build lasting friendships. These lunch groups provide an important opportunity for children and young adults to connect with others in an environment that is relaxed and supportive. It is through these connections that many youth find the confidence to interact, learn social skills, and experience a greater sense of belonging.

Perhaps one of the most heartwarming aspects of Jamie's work is the creation of inclusive birthday parties and personalized milestone events for students and their families. These celebrations allow youth with disabilities to experience the joy of being celebrated by their community. By organizing and hosting these special events, Jamie ensures that every child has the opportunity to enjoy a memorable and meaningful celebration, surrounded by friends, family, and peers. These celebrations are a tangible reminder that every young person deserves to feel valued and appreciated. Jamie has a gift for networking and garnering the support of local businesses and community.

For his commitment to transforming lives and creating a more inclusive, supportive environment for marginalized individuals, Jamie deserves to be recognized for his remarkable contributions to the mental health field. His work serves as an example of how early-career professionals can make a lasting and profound impact on the lives of those in need, promoting well-being, reducing isolation, and fostering a stronger sense of belonging in our society.