

## **Nomination for Patrice Lumumba for the Rising Star Award**

### **Empathy, Compassion, and Understanding**

#### *Winooski High School Unheard Stories*

Patrice played a key role in the 2023-2024 Unheard Stories project at Winooski High School which gave New American (NA) students a platform to share their experiences of discrimination and marginalization. Through short plays, students highlighted the challenges they face and are often unnoticed by teachers, the public, and even their families, and a hopeful vision for the future, fostering understanding and sparking community dialogue.

#### *Winooski school mentorship opportunity*

Patrice championed the creation of a mentorship program for New American students, recognizing the importance of pairing them with senior NA peers or high-achieving NA mentors for guidance, inspiration, and support. This program has successfully empowered students, improved performance, fostered connections, and promoted mental well-being.

#### *Winooski school Necessity Store*

Patrice played a core role in the launching of a necessity store, offering free groceries, hygiene products, clothing, and other essentials. His dedication ensured students had access to resources vital to their wellbeing. Even before the store's official opening, Patrice provided essential winter items to over 200 students. His leadership reflects a holistic approach to community care, addressing both emotional and material needs.

### **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion**

Through the Necessity Store, the mentorship initiative he led, his involvement in the *Unheard Stories project* and other wellness initiatives he led, Patrice promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Winooski school and beyond. His efforts create a supportive environment that fosters positive student achievement.

### **Eagerness to Grow and Learn**

Patrice is known for his warm and approachable nature, always greeting others with a smile that puts everyone at ease. He is open-minded, easy to work with, and has a supportive attitude, and a remarkable ability to connect with people from all walks of life. His positivity and collaborative spirit make him an inspiring and invaluable member of any team.

### **Innovation and Excellence in Leadership**

The Unheard Storytelling co-led by Patrice successfully created a safe space for students to share heavy, emotional experiences, lighten their burdens through collective laughter and creative expression, and challenged assumptions about the New Americans. It raised community awareness of hidden stories and encouraged societal roles in discrimination and racism, and fostered healing.

Under Patrice's guidance, the Necessity Store has become a model of innovation showcasing his skills in logistics, donation procurement, and creating a vibrant, functional space.

Patrice's leadership also played a key role in the Winooski School District earning the prestigious 2024 Worksite Wellness Gold Award, a testament to the district's excellence in fostering physical, emotional, and social well-being.