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**ArtPride New Jersey Foundation Awards Distinguished Arts Advocates
At New Jersey Governor's Awards in Arts Education**

Burlington, NJ – ArtPride New Jersey Foundation will present two awards at the Governor's Awards in Arts Education on June 2 as part of Arts Ed NJ Day celebrated at The College of New Jersey in Ewing.

Dani Biondi, a Hillsborough High School senior who is a member of [NJ Thespians](#) Troupe 10385 will receive a Distinguished Arts Advocate Award for her winning entry in the DemocracyWorks essay contest. The competition, held annually in partnership with New Jersey Thespians, invites high school students who are members of the International Thespian Society to write an essay describing the importance of advocating for theater education and arts education to elected officials. It is also an opportunity for students to convey their personal stories of why theater is such a big part of their lives. Dani's essay is on the ArtPride website in [Voices from the Field blog](#). Dani is a NJ Thespians Festival Ambassador and works as a set/scenic concept designer, outreach and education manager, and will attend New York University in the fall to study journalism and film studies.

Jodi H. Grinwald, CPC, ELI-MP of Barnegat, NJ is CEO and Co-Founder of the [Zzak G. Applaud Our Kids Foundation](#) with her sister Melissa to fully fund performing arts instruction for hundreds of children and teens in need. The mission of the ZZak G. Applaud Our Kids Foundation is to give children the opportunity to find their own voice, increase self-esteem, and give them a sense of belonging and positive reinforcement through the performing arts. The foundation provides 100% funding for children ages 7-18 who meet the financial needs requirements to take ongoing lessons in vocal instruction, dance, acting, and instrumental music for the entire school year and for summer programs. Jodi is also a master connector and social entrepreneur with nearly two decades of experience leading and fundraising for nonprofit organizations, and through her consulting business [Today is the Day](#), uses creativity and connections to effect change and tell stories in new ways.

ArtPride New Jersey CEO Adam Perle states, "ArtPride is excited to once again honor distinguished arts advocates for their role in promoting arts education at the Governor's Awards in Arts Education. It is no secret that many lifelong arts advocates have had transformational experiences rooted in arts education. This year we are proud to honor a student and adult who are making a difference because of

their passion for performing arts. We congratulate Dani and Jodi as 2023 Governor’s Award recipients and know their advocacy will continue to spark love for the arts in others for many years to come.”

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About the Governor’s Awards in Arts Education – The New Jersey Governor’s Awards in Arts Education has a powerful 40+ year history that began in 1980 through an initiative of the Department of Education, and continues to highlight the achievements of students and arts educators, and bring families, business leaders, and state representatives together to celebrate the vital contribution that the arts bring to our communities, our state, and our world.

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About ArtPride New Jersey Foundation – The ArtPride New Jersey Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that promotes the value of the arts to New Jersey’s quality of life, education, and economic vitality through research and a variety of programs and services. For more information about ArtPride, visit ArtPrideNJ.org.