

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, January 27, 2026

## **GlobalMindED to Recognize 2026 Exceptional Leader Award Winners at June 10th Gala**

Denver, Colorado – January 26, 2026 – GlobalMindED, a leading nonprofit organization, is proud to announce the recipients of its prestigious 2026 Exceptional Leader Awards at the Awards Dinner, Wednesday, June 10, 2026, opening night of the GlobalMindED Conference at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel. The evening will be hosted by GlobalMindED leaders from the national and Colorado boards. Tickets, both individual and tables, are available now at <https://globalminded.org/exceptional-leader-awards/awards-dinner/> This year's timely conference theme is: **Dimensions of our Democracy**: Architecting the next 250/150 Years recognizing Colorado statehood and our nation's major anniversary.

Carol Carter, CEO and Founder, GlobalMindED stated, “GlobalMindED is honored to shine a bright light on these remarkable individuals, representing a wide range of industries, with these common denominator qualities: impact, leadership, innovation, and generous leadership for which they are role models for students, graduates and emerging talent that GlobalMindED serves.”

The winners are aligned with GlobalMindED values of empowerment, opportunity, innovation, collaboration, compassion, integrity, lifelong learning and service. GlobalMindED's mission connects students to role models, mentors, internships, experiences and jobs to get them to financial freedom and economic mobility. GlobalMindED is a “network of networks” larger than any one college or organization with leaders across major industry sectors for which our students will reinvent, innovate and lead in the decades ahead. Leaders from Colorado, the nation and the world gather in Denver for this standard-setting event driving economic growth and employment.

The 2026 GlobalMindED Exceptional Leader Award Winners:

- Early Childhood: **Michelle Kang**, CEO of NAEYC. [Daughter of Immigrants Inspires Thousands of Educators Through Care and Kindness: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Early Childhood, Michelle Kang, CEO of NAEYC](#)
- K-12 Education: **Jean Claude Brizard**, CEO of Digital Promise Global. [ESL Haitian Immigrant Leads with Inquiry, Persistence and Joy of Figuring Hard Things Out: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner in K-12, Jean-Claude Brizard, CEO of Digital Promise Global](#)
- Higher Education: **Dr. Freeman Hrabowski**, President Emeritus of UMBC. [From Birmingham Jail to College Graduate, Ph.D., and University President: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Higher Education, Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, President Emeritus of UMBC](#)
- Health and Wellness: **Donna Lynne**, DrPH, CEO, Denver Health. [Advocate Who Always Chooses the Harder Path Advances Health Equity, Humanity and Opportunity for All: Meet Exceptional Award Winner for Health, Donna Lynne, DrPH, CEO, Denver Health](#)
- Banking & Finance: **Mike Lettig**, Senior Managing Director for Huntington National Bank. [Banking a Lifetime of Service to Country and Tribal Nations: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Banking and Finance, Mike Lettig, Senior Managing Director, Group Head Native American Financial Services, Huntington National Bank](#)
- Energy & Sustainability: **Telva McGruder**, Executive Director, General Motors. [14-Year-Old Engineering Visionary Now Delivers Sustainable Engineering and Sustainable Communities: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Energy & Sustainability, Telva McGruder, Exec. Director, GM](#)
- Space & Aerospace: **Ron Lopez**, President of Astroscale. [Son of Cuban Immigrants Transforms the Future of Space Through Service, Innovation, and Global Collaboration: Meet GlobalMindED Exceptional Leader Award Winner, Ron Lopez, President of Astroscale](#)
- Technology: **Kinsey Fabrizio**, President of Consumer Technology Association. [CTA Health Founder, Collaborator, Connector, Tech Innovator, and Mother of Two: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Technology, Kinsey Fabrizio, President of the Consumer Technology Association](#)
- Entrepreneurship: **Stuart Weismiller**, Founder of Everyday Entrepreneur Fund. [American Express/Accenture Exec Alum Empowers Community College Entrepreneurs: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Entrepreneurship, Stuart Weismiller, Founder of Everyday Entrepreneur Fund](#)

- Media & the Arts: **Sergio Fernandez de Cordova**, Chairman of PVBLIC Foundation. [From Platforms to Institutions: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Media and Arts, Sergio Fernandez de Cordova, Chairman of the PVBLIC Foundation.](#)
- Foundations & Funders: **La June Montgomery Tabron**, President and CEO of W.K Kellogg Foundation. [A Declaration of Interdependence for America's Next 250 Years: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Foundations & Funders, La June Montgomery Tabron, President and CEO of W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#)
- Nonprofit: **Steve Schwab**, CEO of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. [From Young Public Servant to Champion for Military and Veteran Caregivers: Meet Exceptional Nonprofit Leader Award Winner Steve Schwab, CEO of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation](#)
- Leadership & Equity: **Kimberly Cooper**, Global Board Chair, International Women's Forum. [Tapping Unique Strengths and Universal Interests Elevates Collective Potential: Meet Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Leadership and Equity, Kimberly Cooper, Global Board Chair, International Women's Forum](#)
- Global Impact: **Valerie Singer**, GM of Global Education at AWS. [From Hardscrabble Upbringing, Typist at Age 11 Catapults to Amazon Global Executive: Meet the Exceptional Leader Award Winner for Global Impact, Valerie Singer, GM of Global Education at AWS](#)

Learn more and register at: <https://globalminded.org/exceptional-leader-awards/>

About GlobalMindED: A Legacy of Empowering Emerging Leaders

GlobalMindED, a non-partisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization celebrating its 12th anniversary, has a proven record of success connecting students to opportunities, role models, mentors, experiences and jobs. The organization has served over 2,000 historically underserved students from 788 universities. Its transformative events, including their annual conference to be held in Denver June 10-12, 2026, and their signature fall event in New York City at the United Nations, have attracted over 14,000 participants, with 450+ speakers annually. Through mentorships, leadership programs, strategic partnerships, and resources, GlobalMindED empowers the next generation to achieve their full potential as learners, leaders and

Learn more at: [www.globalminded.org](http://www.globalminded.org) GlobalMindED Media Contact: Theresa Szcurek, 303-817-3307 (m), [tms@TMSworld.com](mailto:tms@TMSworld.com)  
Available for immediate interview: Carol Carter, Founder/CEO, GlobalMindED

