

# Nominees announced for 2018 Vermont Mentor of the Year Award

*Courtesy of BENJI THURBER*

*Mobius*

**B**URLINGTON — Comcast and Mobius are excited to announce the opening of the voting process for the 2018 Vermont Mentor of the Year Award.

Voters can read the full nominations for each candidate, and submit their choice for one of the 10 finalists by visiting: [www.mobiusmentors.org/comcastmentoroftheyear](http://www.mobiusmentors.org/comcastmentoroftheyear).

Public voting is open through Thursday, Jan. 4, 2018, and will narrow the field down to three finalists. The final award winner will be determined by a selection committee of local mentoring supporters, and Comcast will present the award to the winning mentor at Mobius' annual Mentoring Celebration at the Statehouse later in the month.

St. Albans resident Laura Isham is a mentor for a BFA-St. Albans freshman through the Watershed Mentoring program. She was nominated for the award by Beth Crane, the executive director of Franklin County Caring Communities.

"Laura, who is employed by Customs and Border Protection, has been an amazing mentor to April for almost four years," said Crane. "She has been with April through the ups and downs of early adolescence, challenging times in grade school, the transition from middle school to high school, the loss of family members, and her own (Laura's) wedding."

The other nominees for the 2018 Vermont Mentor of the Year Award are:

- Jim Hyde (Connecting Youth Mentoring at Charlotte Central School/Champlain Valley Union)
- Mark Johnson/Lynne Tiballi (King Street Center's Junior Senior Buddies)
- Ruth Murphy (Milton Mentors!/Milton Community Youth Coalition)
- Terry Palatino (Grand Isle County Mentoring Program/Spectrum Youth and Family Services)
- Arliene Pearson (Journey Mentoring)
- Meghan Rowe (The DREAM Program at the University of Vermont)

- Wanda Stetson (Crossroads: Where Cultures Meet/Baba Tree International)
- Patty Stickney (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Vermont - Windham County Program)
- Terri Weinstein (Twinfield Together Mentoring Program)

All of the Mentor of the Year candidates were nominated by the coordinator of their mentoring program, and are being recognized both for their service as a mentor and for other additional contributions to their program.

The Vermont Mentor of the Year Award, presented by Comcast, is a part of Mobius' annual celebration of Vermont Mentoring Month each January. Throughout January 2018, Mobius and mentoring programs around the state are organizing a wide variety of activities to promote the positive benefits of mentoring, including volunteer recognition events, mentor pair activities, and benefit dinners at local restaurants. The festivities culminate later in the month at Mobius' Mentoring Celebration at the Statehouse, a statewide event that convenes more than 100 mentors, mentees, legislators, and supporters in Montpelier. For the latest updates, and finalized schedule for the 2018 Mentoring Celebration, visit [www.mobiusmentors.org](http://www.mobiusmentors.org) later this month.

According to the "Mentoring Effect," a study released in 2014 by MENTOR (The National Mentoring Partnership), one in three youth in Vermont will enter adulthood without having a formal or informal mentoring relationship with a caring adult. National studies by MENTOR and Big Brothers Big Sisters demonstrate that youth with mentors are less likely to engage in risky behavior with drugs and alcohol, and are more likely to develop positive relationships with peers and adults, and pursue college and other post-secondary opportunities. Based on the 2016 Vermont Mentoring Surveys, youth supported by mentoring programs in Vermont are 52 percent more likely to feel like they matter to people in their community, and nearly 75 percent of mentors play a direct role in their mentee's education.