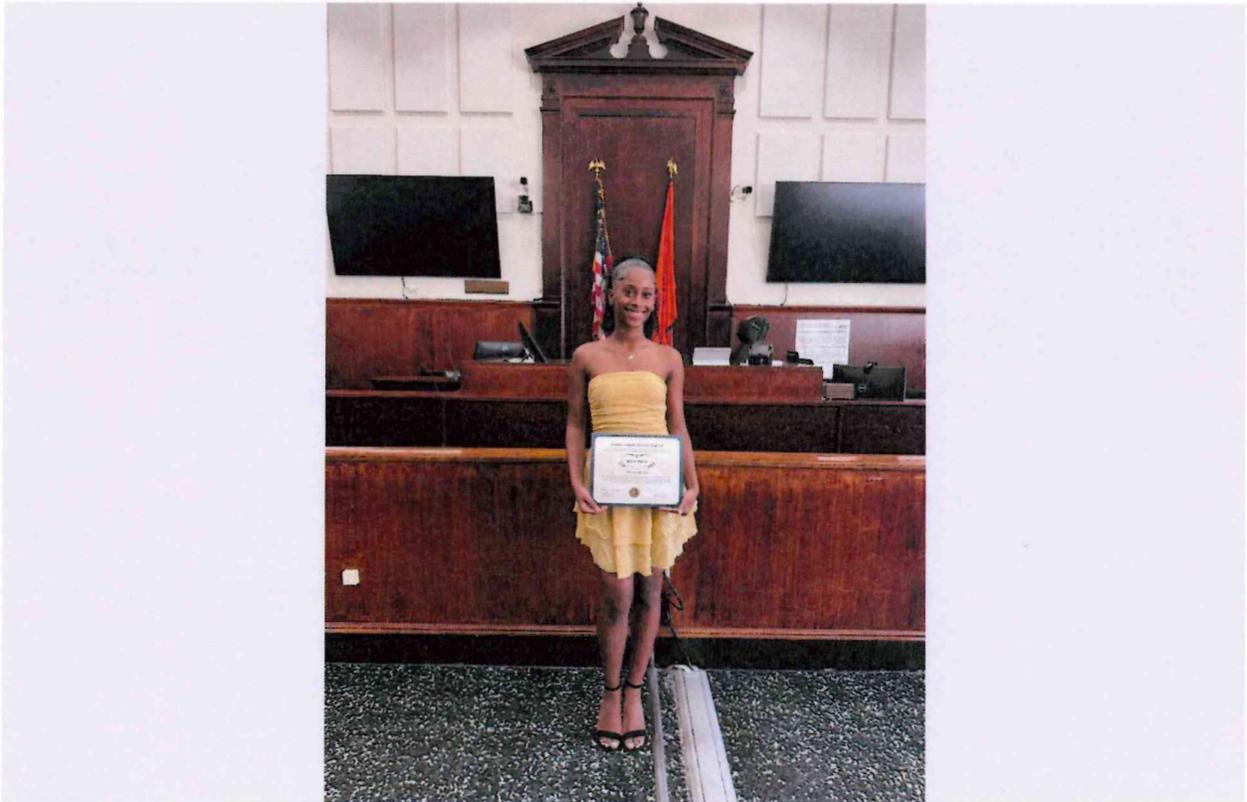


# Baldwin High's Alexandra Francois honored with Nassau County SHIELD Award for academic excellence and community leadership

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**Alexandra Francois was honored by the Nassau County District Attorney's Office with the SHIELD Award.**

COURTESY ALEXANDRA FRANCOIS

By [Hernesto Galdamez](#)

Alexandra Francois, a rising senior at Baldwin High School, was recently honored at the Nassau County Courthouse in Mineola with the prestigious SHIELD Award — which recognizes high school juniors who exemplify academic excellence, strong character and a deep commitment to community service.

The Nassau County District Attorney's Office presented her with the award, given annually to the county's standout students, who have demonstrated a spirit of initiative and a drive to bring about positive change.

Francois, the only Baldwin student to receive the award this year, said she was stunned when she learned she had been selected. She said she was called down to the guidance office one day with no prior notice or knowledge of even having been considered for the honor.

"I thought it was for something else — I had already done my junior meeting," she recalled. "But then they told me I had received the SHIELD Award, and I was like, 'Wow.' It's really a big deal for me.

"I was really shocked, I was really grateful," she added. "I realized I was the only high school junior at Baldwin receiving it, so I honestly felt really honored."

Francois said what made the recognition particularly meaningful was that it affirmed the work she had accomplished in the community and the leadership roles she had undertaken outside of academics.

"I don't do these projects and initiatives just to build my résumé — I genuinely do them to better my community," she said. "To have that recognized, hit my heart. It really means a lot."

Her mother, Martine Perrin, said the award was a reflection of her daughter's strong values and deep sense of purpose.

"I am extremely proud of Allie. She works hard in school, however giving back to the community has been her primary focus," Perrin said. "Whether it's donating to the pointe shoe program, volunteering at the community center, or tutoring in school, she has learned that sharing her gifts with others and making an impact is important. She learned at an early age that contributing helps to change lives in a positive way."

Nominees are chosen based on a combination of academic performance and service in and outside of school.

Her service includes mentoring underclassmen, especially freshmen adjusting to high school life, and volunteering in elementary classrooms through the High

School Heroes program. She has also participated in local initiatives like the annual Toys for Tots drive, tree lighting ceremonies and AIDS walk fundraisers.

Among her most impactful projects was her work as an ambassador for Brown Girls Do Ballet, a national organization promoting diversity in the arts. Francois worked with her local Capezio dancewear store to make sure it stocked ballet shoes in a range of skin tones, something previously unavailable to dancers of color in the area.

“That’s probably one of the things I’m most proud of,” she said. “To help bring that kind of change and inclusion in dance — which is still very white-dominated — was huge for me.”

Despite a packed schedule that includes daily commutes to the Harlem School of the Arts for dance training and a rigorous course load of Advanced Placement classes, Francois maintained a 4.0 GPA and earned top scores on her AP exams. She credited her success to time management, determination and support from her peers, who helped her juggle it all.

“It’s definitely been a challenge,” she said. “But I care so much about both my academics and my dancing. I just found ways to make it work.”

Francois said the SHIELD Award is not just a personal milestone — it’s a reflection of the Baldwin community that raised her.

“This community has given me so many opportunities,” she said. “To represent Baldwin with this award feels amazing. I wouldn’t want to receive it in any other place.”

