



Non-Profit Organisation Awards 2026



BEOPEN
CREATIVE THINK TANK



Most Dedicated Education Provider 2026 – Texas

Serving students and their families at a critical juncture in their lives, Ki Charter stands as both a lifeline for hope and the foundation of a child's academic success. The premier educational provider for students residing in residential facilities and day treatment centres, Ki Charter provides high-needs students with a career- and academic-focused curriculum to help them maximise their potential and grow to love learning. It then introduces them back into their respective schools with improved behaviour and fewer learning gaps. For more, we caught up with Superintendent Dr. Jerry Lager.

Non-Profit Organisation Awards 2026

Acquisition International is delighted to confirm that the Non-Profit Organisation Awards 2026 are officially open.

Now entering its sixth consecutive year, this global programme returns with one central purpose: to spotlight the organisations and individuals whose work is transforming lives, improving systems, and building better futures.

This is where community champions, bold changemakers, strategic advocates, and sector innovators stand alongside each other. We are here to recognise everything from frontline humanitarian support and health equity to groundbreaking education initiatives, environmental protection, economic empowerment, social justice advancement, and every credible mission centred on public good.

Every year, the Non-Profit Organisation Awards celebrate the talent and tenacity behind the impact. The dedication. The problem solving. The creativity and persistence required to shift outcomes in the real world. In 2026 we are excited to elevate these achievements once again, and to shine a light on the people who never stop pushing for better.



Sofi Parry, Senior Editor



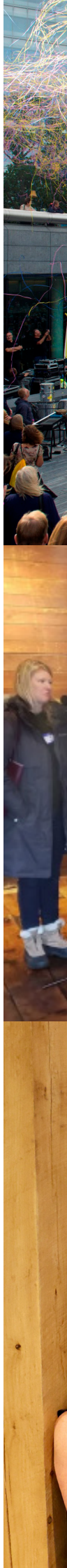
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Most Dedicated Education Provider 2026 – Texas

Serving students and their families at a critical juncture in their lives, Ki Charter stands as both a lifeline for hope and the foundation of a child's academic success. The premier educational provider for students residing in residential facilities and day treatment centres, Ki Charter provides high-needs students with a career- and academic-focused curriculum to help them maximise their potential and grow to love learning. It then introduces them back into their respective schools with improved behaviour and fewer learning gaps. For more, we caught up with Superintendent Dr. Jerry Lager.

An open-enrolment public charter school with campuses across Texas, Ki Charter works with students from the first grade through to the twelfth grade, supporting their behavioural, academic, and developmental needs through these sites, which are located exclusively in residential treatment facilities, acute care facilities, and hospitals. Operating in these environments means that the team here work with a highly mobile group of high-needs students who are dealing with intense behavioural and psychiatric challenges.

Exploring the process in a bit more detail, Ki Charter serves students who have been removed from school due to these challenges, which have severely impeded their learning. These students have then been placed in local psychiatric hospitals, such as the San Marcos Treatment Center, as a last resort, and they are admitted and discharged based on the clinical determinations of medical providers, with the district having little input when a child is discharged due to medical decisions and insurance reasons. This is where Ki Charter comes in: it educates the students who call these facilities home.

Students in residential settings have an average length of stay of 150 days and in acute care setting, students usually only stay for around seven to ten days as they undergo acute stabilisation, before they are then transitioned into outpatient services. When their educational needs are picked up by Ki Charter, they are usually mid-year or mid-course, with their history of challenges meaning that their prior schooling has been marred by significant disruption. As a result, these students have some of the most demanding needs of any young people in the country, and yet they are often underserved by their communities.

Partnering with hospitals such as The San Marcos Treatment Center, Meridell Achievement Center, Millwood Hospital, Kingwood Pines

Hospital, Canyon Creek Behavioral Health, Austin Oaks, Branches Arlington, Branches Fort Worth, University Behavioral Health of Denton, Collin Springs, Mesa Springs, Roy Mass Youth Alternatives, Clarity, Retreat 4 Kids, San Antonio Behavioral Health, as well as Texas State University in a partnership to develop the highest quality resident teachers, Ki Charter and its impassioned team help these students to develop the knowledge and the skills they need to become active citizens, something they achieve through an engaging curriculum and small class sizes.

The more immediate purpose of this is to make the integration of these students back into their respective schools – which they will reattend after having completed their treatment at one of the locations where Ki Charter is based – as seamless as possible. It does by plugging gaps in their education and teaching them good character skills. The reintegration is often the most challenging part for students, but by advocating for them both in and beyond the classroom, Ki Charter offers everything they need to thrive.

“ We are fervently committed to reintroducing our students to their respective schools with improved behaviour, reduced learning/opportunity gaps, and improved social-emotional skills to succeed in anything they choose to do. ”

Going back to the beginning of Ki Charter's journey, its start came in the spring of 2013, when Jerry Lager and Philip Muzzy met to discuss what education in a residential treatment facility should (and could) look like. They agreed it had to be something innovative, and this mutual understanding and shared vision would lead to the formation of the Ki Education Foundation. More people would join the team soon thereafter, and in the fall of 2014, Texas' Commissioner of Education approved their bid for a charter school district.

The resulting Ki Charter was founded on the premise of change. Its slogan, 'every change has a story', is a great example of this, chosen because the team here are not only educating students, but also changing the way they think about education. Students who attend Ki Charter receive intensive psychiatric evaluation and treatment- while Ki Charter ensures they do not fall behind in their respective studies.





As for how exactly it does this, Ki Charter leverages the skills of a highly qualified group of teachers who are all content-area and special education certified, meaning that they can strike a balance between core instruction that meets individual needs while also pushing students to achieve more than they would in a traditional academic setting. The curriculum taught here is based on fully integrated social-emotional learning and consists of both project-based learning and STEM classes taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Alongside this, students are also taught career and technical education (CTE) classes with vocational certifications and a number of credit recovery and acceleration options (including summer school) to see that they remain on track. However, as Jerry himself explained, the focus here is more long term: “We understand that not every student at Ki Charter will attend post-secondary education, so it is our responsibility to prepare them to become productive members of society before they leave our school. Through our vocational programming, CTE courses, and integrated STEM curriculum, we are accomplishing this goal.”

Of course, there is so much more to Ki Charter than just this curriculum, and the success it has fostered over the last decade is due in no small part to its governing board. Comprising five community leaders who work closely together to make key decisions regarding school policies, budget allocations, educational goals, and more, everything they do is grounded in the overarching aim of making sure that every student receives the best education. This is something that starts at board level and runs down throughout the school.

“
We firmly believe in giving kids a second chance, as a lot of times, our students were dealt a bad hand. It is our goal to reinvigorate their love for education and to equip them with all the tools they need to be successful in life.
”

On a day-to-day basis, those responsible for upholding this are the staffing team, and Ki Charter has made sure only the best educators are on hand to equip its students with all they need to navigate this traumatic period of their lives. To this end, all staff are trained in mental health support before anything else, with this including behaviour enhancement, verbal de-escalation, trauma-informed care, crisis prevention, and more. Only once staff grasp these concepts can they begin to relate to the students and make a real difference.

On the back of this, and diving deeper into the recruitment process, Jerry told us: “We recruit based on soft skills. Whereas the technical skills can be taught later, you can’t teach people how to be good human beings – that is innate.” He continued: “Last year we had a 100% rate of retention in our district. This speaks to our culture of accountability and excellence and standards which we do not deviate from”.

Notably, this commitment to providing the best care goes beyond just the education itself, and also covers many of the other elements associated with the school day. For example, through The San Marcos Treatment Center, the school is able to ensure that an excellent nutrition programme is available at no additional cost for all students. Everyone is invited to take advantage of this service, which is yet another example of Ki Charter choosing to focus on the whole person and not just their requirements as a learner.

This is something that Jerry and the team here have been passionate about since the very start of this venture, as it is only through this level of holistic and encompassing support that the real transformations they seek can be achieved. They may start with education, but the environments they operate in necessitate more. It is for this reason that the next steps for Ki Charter are all about continuing to deliver this unique guidance, touching more lives without breaking from the principles it has spent more than ten years deeply rooting.

Looking closer at the future plans of this open-enrolment public charter school, Ki Charter is preparing to open a handful of new campuses over the coming year, as well as developing a tangible and highly relevant certification programme that allows its students to attain key qualifications before they leave. This will allow them to progress into more skilled jobs in fields such as dentistry, giving these students a chance to gain meaningful employment and thrive in a job market

that is facing unprecedented levels of competition – without having to stay in education.

Interestingly, this is nothing new for Ki Charter, which has been offering qualifications for a long time as part of the vocational programming touched on above. Students have already come away with the likes of food-handling certifications and OSHA certification, and the welcome introduction of these new accredited programmes is a great way for those who are unsure which route to take to gain some invaluable experience.

“

We strive to ensure that each student has the care and support needed to learn and grow, while creating a cohesive and safe learning environment for all.

”

Following all of this, it is unsurprising to learn that the outcomes of Ki Charter students since it opened its doors have been incredible, and there is a lot of data that the school has to show that the students here are highly successful. For instance, those who attend Ki Charter have higher average reading and Math 180 levels than those in traditional schools. A lot of this is down to the learning that is delivered here being tailored to the individual student, an approach that is essential given that the year may finish with only 10-20% of the students it started with, this due to the high mobility rates of students.

Such a demonstrable impact across the lives of its pupils, along with the 100% employee retention rate mentioned above, are irrefutably two of the things that makes Jerry the most proud about the vision and mission he and his team have shaped through Ki Charter, simply as they reflect the time and effort they have put in to see that every student who passes through their ecosystem of learning and development ends up with best chance in life – a fate they would likely not be afforded at a more traditional school.

Thus, as Ki Charter continues to show, every change really does have a story.

Reflecting on its deserved recognition as the Most Dedicated Education Provider 2026 – Texas and being featured as the centrepiece of this year’s Non-Profit Organisation Awards, Jerry looked back over the last decade and shared what he believes is the greatest achievement of Ki Charter to date: “Serving tens of thousands of students placed in psychiatric facilities and seeing outcomes that would never have come to fruition without the great educators and high standards we strive for.”

This is undoubtedly a feat worthy of acclaim, with the same able to be said for the reduced rates of recidivism and the nullification of the school-to-prison pipeline in those areas where Ki Charter works. It is clear then that this is a vital service for so many young people across the state of Texas, not to mention their parents, families, and communities. Capturing the spirit of the Non-Profit Organisation Awards perfectly, we urge anyone inspired by this truly transformative work to visit Ki Charter at the web address linked below.

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Best International Cultural Initiative & Think Tank 2026 & Most Influential Philanthropy Businesswoman 2026 (Europe): Elena Baturina

BE OPEN Foundation

The world is shifting towards sustainable practices, though further progress is critical to the global mission of meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A key component of this mission is engaging with the next generation of innovators and inventors, nurturing their passion for sustainability and creation whilst encouraging them to contribute with bold and transformative solutions. Introducing BE OPEN, an innovative cultural think tank developing global initiatives that support the young creative minds of today in building forward-thinking solutions for the world of tomorrow. We spoke with its Founder Elena Baturina below, as both BE OPEN and herself are named in the Non-Profit Organisation Awards 2026.

“BE OPEN is committed to helping a moderate amount of young people in a very practical way, supporting their passion to help their communities and make the world a better place.”

BE OPEN is a private non-governmental and non-profit humanitarian foundation on a mission to foster creativity and innovation within the sustainable development space. The cultural and social initiative was designed to serve as a bridge between the great minds of today – such as philosophers, sociologists, designers, architects, artists, writers, businessmen, and opinion leaders – with the promising new minds of tomorrow, harnessing creative brain power through an ecosystem of connective events, exhibitions, and engagements.

The foundation was founded in 2012 by Elena Baturina, a self-made entrepreneur and philanthropist recently recognised as Europe’s Most Influential Philanthropy Businesswoman 2026. Having built a formidable business consortium from the ground up, Elena’s international career has spanned a wide spectrum of industries ranging from manufacturing to venture capital. At the core of Elena’s specialist focus is a deep-seated desire to contribute towards making the world a better place by investing in the next generation of innovators and forward-thinkers.

In this regard, Elena established the BE OPEN Foundation as a vehicle for her philanthropic initiatives, having always involved herself in charities that prioritise people and their ideas. Inspired by Elena’s overarching vision, BE OPEN operates through conferences, competitions, exhibitions,



and art events. These initiatives enhance the educational experience for schoolchildren and students around the world, encouraging them to embrace being creative, proactive, and entrepreneurial in their work.

“The foundation is lucky enough to have creative young people from all over the world actively respond and become part of the initiatives,” Elena told us. *“We believe that their unconventional creativity – the freshness of their vision – are valuable for developing out-of-the-box solutions.”*

At present, there are two prominent trends within BE OPEN’s work: BE OPEN Challenges and BE OPEN Art. The foundation recognises the power of promoting creative problem-solving, and has developed a range of annual competitions focused on solving actual and urgent issues impacting today’s landscape, formulated by the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme aims to raise awareness of the SDGs whilst contributing towards their achievement by recognising, showcasing, and promoting the best design ideas that can transform inadequate systems and create better conditions for an equitable and environmentally prosperous world.

With six finalised competitions and one ongoing, BE OPEN has offered continued support and recognition to its young creative participants. Its international competitions are open globally to all students and recent graduates who specialise in the fields of design, architecture, engineering, and media. The best work is awarded by the foundation



with monetary prizes, honorary mentions, publications, access to additional education, and opportunities to pitch the winning projects at major international events in the field of sustainability.

At the same time, the foundation is focused on BE OPEN Art. It operates an online gallery that supports emerging artists around the world, helping them to gain visibility and find their place within the creative community. BE OPEN's art committee performs a worldwide selection of artworks in an unprecedented variety of media, ranging from the traditional painting, photography, and graphics styles to more innovative and trending mediums such as NFT, AI Art, Urban Art, wall sculptures, feminist art, and much more.

"Due to the regional outreach, we are increasing the versatility of art represented in the BE OPEN Art Gallery," Elena added. "Introducing such initiatives as 'By Artists for Artists' and 'Community Support Fund' that offer useful and applicable content by the more-to-less successful artists featured in the gallery will help to build a healthy, supportive community rooted in the values of BE OPEN Art."

Despite its worldwide reception, BE OPEN has certainly encountered challenges over the course of its operations. The most significant hurdles have been related to establishing productive communication and building long-term relations within the array of communities and institutions that are central to its work. The organisation has partaken in a wide range of relevant events that aid it achieving maximum visibility whilst providing lifetime opportunities to its project participants.

This event engagement began with the UN Global Conferences COP28 in 2023 and COP29 in 2024. BE OPEN has also attended the 2024 International Conference on Sustainable Digital Innovations Conference and Exhibition, the MED9 Ministerial Summit for Education for Sustainable Development, and the UNECE Forum on Sustainable Development Education: Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures, as well as the International Sustainable Energy Conference 2024, the Sustainability Expo Asia 2025, and various other events.

Similarly, capturing the attention of young people is not easy in this modern age of information overload, even when a project poses clear benefits to their future. BE OPEN has found establishing the necessary communications and earning support from schools and universities to be an ongoing challenge, but a challenge it will face with determination and perseverance.

"We believe in consistency and focus," said Elena. "BE OPEN has assembled an incredible community of creative and highly professional people from many walks of life, who appreciate and support what the foundation does and tries to achieve. They are curators, professors, students, artists, researchers, designers, futurists, and many more. They are supportive and generous with their expertise, knowledge, and experience; and they help us grow personally and professionally."



This sense of unity and passion is reflected throughout BE OPEN's internal team, who serve as the very heart of all the foundation stands for. BE OPEN is propelled by a close-knit team of employees boasting specific areas of expertise and responsibility, and rarely ever looks to recruit. Instead, any necessary expansion for a new project comes from individuals the team has worked alongside on previous projects, such as those met at panels and conferences, engaged as curators or experts, or even past participants of BE OPEN competitions. This expansion model allows for shared interests, respect for creativity, and unconventionalism to guide its work.

BE OPEN is currently in the stages of finalising this year's SDG5-focused competition for students and graduates: Design Equality with Innovation. This will mark the seventh year of the programme, as well as a seventh sustainable goal that BE OPEN has approached by channelling the creative and innovative minds of young people to mend a worldwide injustice. Competition winners will be provided with monetary prizes, in addition to the opportunity to attend a major international conference that will allow them to become a part of the conversation and, hopefully, the solution.

"Every time a student comes back to report being able to move further with their solutions due to our involvement – whether expanding, refining, or taking to the implementation stage – it is the greatest achievement," Elena shared. "Every year we get reassurance that educating and motivating young people to become leaders of creative industries and sustainable change is the best way forward. And every year, BE OPEN tries to do more by offering them a platform for discussion and exchange of ideas, opportunities for self-education, boosting their confidence, and helping them to see that they matter."

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Sexual Abuse Survivor Support Organization of the Year 2026 – New York



One out of four girls will be sexually abused before her 16th birthday in the USA. Incest is the most common of all sexual abuse and the least spoken about. Girlthrive's mission over the past 20 years is to spread the healing for all girls and women everywhere who have experienced incest or any sexual abuse. Girlthrive gives voice and healing to what is unspeakable, incest and all sexual abuse. When you speak out with what you were told to keep secret, the healing begins.

Contact: Dr. Patti Feuereisen Founder and Director
Organization: Girlthrive
Website: www.girlthrive.org

The seed of Girlthrive started 30 years ago when Dr. Patti Feuereisen, a psychologist in Brooklyn NY heard story after story of abuse from brave teen girls and young women. An underground network began and girl would tell girl that "Dr. Patti" would listen and give support and tell you that sexual abuse is never the survivors fault. These girls and young women had been through horrors and come out the other side. They were strong and righteous and wanted other girls to know you heal after incest

Incest survivors feel invisible, no one knows from the outside what is happening inside. One of these girls asked for the group to continue in her high-school because she just knew there were other girls from many cultures that would also need to tell their stories, and they could meet under one roof. This Brooklyn High-School continues to be a

melting pot of cultures. Girls whose families immigrated from Trinidad, Mexico, China, Vietnam, Korea, Russia on and on came to the sexual abuse survivor group.

These beautiful, empathetic, strong girls and young women created Girlthrive. They asked for their stories to be told; they asked to write a book so that girls and women from all over the world would know they are not alone, and there is deep healing and thriving after sexual abuse. The birth of the book *Invisible Girls: The Truth About Sexual Abuse* took ten years of deep conversations with many girls and women, and the first edition was published in 2006.

As a vehicle of additional healing following this publication, Girlthrive was created as a gift to survivors. Dr. Patti shared: "We created a website as a community resource and or a place to share her story."

Girls from all over the world began to email Dr. Patti with their experiences. Girlthrive would send them a Thrivership to honor what they had come through. This is a Thrivership instead of scholarship because these are to help a girl or young woman thrive after abuse, with whatever gift they choose. Thriverships are laptop computers, horseback riding lessons, dance classes, art supplies, cameras, poetry classes, massage therapy, tuition, rent, health insurance, seminar fees, food, trips abroad, whatever a girl identifies as an avenue to thrive. It is all very direct and personal through reaching out to Dr. Patti via email or working with their therapist or counselor from an agency. This is Girlthrive's 20th anniversary, and it has honored hundreds of girls and young women.

Dr. Patti added: "We have followed girls through college, law school, medical school. Another aspect of spreading the healing is through sending copies of *Invisible Girls* in its 3rd expanded edition all over the world to prisons, residential treatment centers, rape crisis centers, foster care agencies. Any funds from *Invisible Girls* goes back into Girlthrive where 90% goes directly to the girls and women who need it. 10% is administrative and no-one has a salary."

To celebrate its 20th anniversary Girlthrive is working on an audio book of *Invisible Girls: The Truth About Sexual Abuse* with girls' voices from around the world. The young women helping to create this audio book will earn income from their participation. As one teen girl who survived incest said it best, "Simple, *Invisible Girls*, and Girlthrive saved my life".

**“
Girlthrive will
continue to be a lifeline
for any girl who reaches
out to us.
”**

You can find more about Girlthrive via its website.



Creative Media Support NPO 2026 – Massachusetts

A trusted hub for local information and community storytelling, Wrentham Community Media offers the chance for residents and local institutions to inform, educate, and engage with their community. It does so in a number of ways, from traditional cable channels to a weekly podcast on the Beatles, and from hands-on workshops to local government meeting broadcasts. We take a closer look at this NPO specialising in community media production and live-event coverage.

Wrentham Community Media (WCM) is a membership-based NPO specialising in nurturing connections, civic engagement, and creative expression through public, educational and governmental (PEG) media channels. The organisation delivers an open, inclusive forum for expression, offering equal opportunities to the likes of training, production resources, and cablecasting services, all on a first-come, first-served basis. It also runs four subscriber-based cable channels and related digital platforms.

The four stations where its community programming can be found are the Wrentham Community Media Public and Entertainment Channel (Comcast channel 8, Verizon channel 39); the Wrentham Community Media Educational Channel (Comcast channel 6, Verizon channel 37); the Wrentham Community Media Government Channel (Comcast channel 22, Verizon channel 38); and the Wrentham Community Media HD and Video on Demand Channel (Comcast channel 1073, Verizon channel 36).

Its presence across these traditional cable channels is, however, just the beginning, as live streaming, on-demand video, and web-based content are all encompassed within its ecosystem. The purpose here is to promote accessibility, allowing viewers to access this programming regardless of how they consume media. With the media landscape changing at a faster pace than at any point during the last 50 years, this ability to pivot is helping to set WCM apart, without sacrificing its local roots.

These roots are a huge part of this NPO's identity, as its purpose has always been to inform, educate, and inspire the community of Wrentham, which is a small town in Norfolk County, Massachusetts. This is why its work covers everything from the administration and programming of the four PEG cable channels above to live and recorded coverage of town meetings, school events, and local sports. It also offers production services, access to equipment/facilities, and detailed training/technical support.

Covering all bases when it comes to creative media, WCM is set apart from many other PEG-access facilities through its combination of a community focus, operational flexibility, and forward-thinking technology investments. Exploring some of the differentiators in more detail, the IP-based infrastructure embraced by this NPO is advanced compared to traditional baseband systems, allowing for flexible signal routing, scalable production workflows, and easier integration with streaming and on-demand platforms.

"An IP backbone positions WCM to adapt quickly as media delivery continues shifting toward digital and multi-platform distribution."

The content it delivers is just the beginning, and perhaps more exciting is what goes on behind the scenes, thanks to the professional-level production the team here are able to carry out in their small-town setting. From multi-camera field production to studio programming and comprehensive meeting coverage, these services rival that of larger



providers. What these bigger companies lack is the local accessibility and personal support for residents and volunteers, but this is where WCM really shines.

This close collaboration is key, especially when working with local government and schools, as it strengthens civic engagement and public trust. Moreover, by operating across the community of Wrentham on a first-come, first-served basis, the organisation stands for the likes of fairness, inclusion, and hands-on training without barriers. This means that its residents are not simply viewers, they create, produce, and contribute to the programming of their town. The benefits of this are immeasurable.

Of course, as a small organisation, WCM is also able to quickly adapt, not just to the different forms of media consumption mentioned above, but also on a creator level, utilising new technologies and production methods to better serve the community, all without any of the operational constraints that hinder many larger PEG-based organisations.

It is in the combination of these strengths, especially the investment WCM has made in its IP infrastructure and its digital reach, which is helping to position it as a modern, adaptable, and community-focused resource for the people of Wrentham, Massachusetts.

In making the complex world of media, which often feels out of reach for those looking to get into it, especially if they live in small towns, accessible through the likes of in-depth training and local coverage, this NPO is empowering its residents to share their voices and tell their stories. Following this, we are delighted to recognise Wrentham Community Media with a title in our Non-Profit Organisation Awards 2026.

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Most Trusted NDIS Disability Support Provider 2026 – Australia

For many migrants and refugees, difficulties do not end after relocation. Individuals and families alike often struggle with employment, social isolation, and mental health challenges, which are only further driven by any language or cultural barriers, and integration into their new community is a daunting task. But least advantaged mainstream and Indigenous persons experience almost the same challenges, even if differently. People with disability and Seniors not only struggle to navigate the very complex frameworks, but it is extremely hard to find a trusted registered Service Provider. In Australia, one trusted non-profit organisation is working tirelessly to overcome these hurdles; ARMIA Healing the Incurables serves communities throughout Brisbane and beyond, offering specialist services designed to remove individuals from welfare dependency and reposition them for prosperity.

Located in the Sunnybank suburb of Brisbane, ARMIA is a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse non-profit organisation dedicated to providing holistic, multicultural support to New Australians and least-advantaged individuals. The organisation first opened its doors on 1st of March 2015 in response to rising community requests from Australians hailing from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and has since evolved to offer a carefully structured programme of activities and programs aimed at breaking down the barriers of social isolation, cultural integration, and employment within Australian Refugee and CaLD communities.

ARMIA was established by Protais Muhirwa, a seasoned business leader, consultant, and cultural awareness expert. Before working in Australia, Protais successfully created and directed a highly regarded migrant integration organisation in South Africa that was responsible for transforming thousands of lives. Building on to his significant success in this field, Protais shifted his focus to the Australian sector to work with Australian migrants through Red Cross, in addition to taking on the role of state-wide coordinator for Carers Queensland's CaLD Programme.

Under Protais' informed guidance, ARMIA supports refugees and migrants who are no longer part of the Australian Government's settlement programme, empowering them to become part of the workforce or business community and proudly take their place as acknowledged and valued members of Australian society. The team works with individuals who do not integrate into society, even with the country's five-year government assistance programme.



In this respect, ARMIA's clients typically experience social isolation and can find it difficult to undertake simple tasks that most Australians take for granted. They are often limited by the invisible barriers of education, employment, cultural differences, mental health, aged care, physical health, and social interaction, which can lead to extreme isolation, restricted work opportunities, welfare dependence, and exposure to radicalism and fundamentalism.

In working with these clients, ARMIA aims to shift capable, skilled individuals from welfare dependency and empower them to join – or rejoin – the workforce, their community, and wider society. Its operations are formed around the three central pillars of affordable housing, community empowerment, and employment and entrepreneurship. Within these frameworks, it utilises five interconnected programmes – education, business initiatives, health and wellbeing, community engagement, and life skills and vocational training – that contain multiple activities to enable secondary group therapy and capacity building.

In 2018, ARMIA expanded its services to integrate least-advantaged mainstream and indigenous people into its clientele. In addition to promoting interactive and participative multicultural integration across its client base, this strategic move has also played a key role in countering racism and xenophobia by encouraging collaboration and mutual understanding.

The following year saw the organisation expand further, assisting individuals with disabilities to live a normal, full life with their families. As a registered NDIS and In-Home Care provider, ARMIA offers disability support, psychosocial coaching, and culturally competent home- and aged-care services that run alongside its employment programmes, enabling workforce-ready clients to achieve financial independence whilst ensuring vulnerable and senior clients receive invaluable care tailored to their cultural and linguistic needs, often beyond their expectations.

To date, ARMIA has holistically removed thousands and thousands of fit individuals from welfare dependency, empowering them to join the workforce or establish their own business. The organisation has empowered a vast number of youths to attend university and find work, whereas they may have otherwise dropped out of school before graduating or become radicalised by fundamentalists. Furthermore, the team has reunited countless families that were disintegrating due to cultural shock, mental health complications, or domestic violence.

At its core, ARMIA symbolically views itself as a tree, welcoming any birds with any needs at any time. Its exceptional work has cemented the organisation as a trusted pillar to vulnerable communities across Brisbane and beyond, demonstrating that care can be provided in a sensitive, multicultural, integrated manner. For its significant contributions to the lives of countless New Australians, least-advantaged individuals, indigenous people, those living with disabilities and the elderly, ARMIA has truly earned its status as Australia's Most Trusted NDIS Disability Support Provider 2026.

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Autism Support Charity of the Year 2026 – Canada & Award for International Autism Advocacy & Service 2026

Autism Canada

The Canadian Medical Association Journal reports that experts estimate one to two per cent of Canada's population is autistic, with one in 50 Canadian individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. For over four decades, the dedicated team behind Autism Canada has worked tirelessly to address the complex challenges facing autistic people and their support networks across the nation. We took a closer look at the organisation's exceptional work below, as Autism Canada is named in the Non-Profit Organisation Awards 2026.

Autism Canada was established in 2015, when two of Canada's leading autism organisations – Autism Society Canada, established in 1976, and Autism Canada Foundation, established in 2002 – merged to form Autism Canada. In joining forces, the organisations realised that they could build one strong organisation capable of supporting the Canadian autism community.

Propelled by the power of two leading organisations, Autism Canada advocates for autistic individuals across the country, in addition to providing resources to those seeking guidance and information. Its team participates in discussions surrounding national, provincial, and local policy change; educates Canada and the wider world on autism; and works hard to create a safe and inclusive environment through a robust catalogue of training programmes.

One such example is Autism Canada's Community Assistance Program, CAP, which provides subsidised financial support to reduce the barriers to care that impact autistic people throughout their lifetime. CAP is available to autistic people and their families across Canada – including children, youth, and adults, as well as the families and caregivers who support them – regardless of province or territory, though subject to provider availability and budget funding.

Rather than replacing existing funding sources, the programme is designed to supplement gaps in access to care and support the essential services that are not covered by public programmes, private insurance, or employer benefits. With the support of registered service providers, CAP aids the autistic community in accessing meaningful, person-centred, and neuro-affirming care that reflects their unique needs, goals, and strengths.

Approved applicants may receive up to \$2,000 per calendar year towards psychological assessments, and to \$1,000 per calendar year towards other eligible supports. All applications are individually reviewed and assessed based on demonstrated need, the type of service requested, provincial fee standards, existing funding sources, and overall application volume. Ultimately, CAP aims to lift the strain off the provincial system and reduce waiting times, whilst allowing individuals and families to access the services they need until they can access provincial funding.

Autism Canada has also developed Inclusion by Design, an accredited training programme aiming to shift how inclusion is understood, created, and sustained. Built with autistic voices guiding every decision, Inclusion by Design supports schools, businesses, cultural spaces, community organisations, and public-facing environments across Canada in identifying and removing barriers while embedding accessibility into their everyday practices.

Inclusion by Design equips those who interact with autistic and neurodivergent people, as well as those with sensory sensitivities, with essential tools they can utilise in everyday situations. The programme

aims to teach participants how to build spaces where people feel valued, understood, and able to fully participate, whether they are working with children, youth, adults, families, or the broader community.



In October 2025, Autism Canada partnered with CN to establish Empowering Connections, a CN-supported National Support Line providing timely, compassionate connection for autistic and neurodivergent people navigating moments of stress, uncertainty, and disconnection. With services delivered by autistic-led staff, Empowering Connections is driven by lived experiences, peer-informed care, and the desire to foster a true sense of belonging within the neurodivergent community.

At its core, Autism Canada believes that every autistic individual is a valuable part of society, and deserves to be treated with a level of dignity that respects their ability to involve themselves in social and civic life. The organisation has made significant strides in its mission to advocate alongside and support individuals on the autism spectrum, as well as their families and caregivers.

We at Acquisition International are delighted to bestow Autism Canada with the Award for International Autism Advocacy and Service 2026 for setting the global benchmark for neurodivergent support, in addition to recognising its lifechanging contributions to the Canadian autistic community with the title of Canada's Autism Support Charity of the Year 2026.

Whether you are seeking support for yourself or someone you care for, or if you simply want to get involved in the mission, visit Autism Canada's website today.

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Most Compassionate Animal Sanctuary NPO 2026 – USA

Catherine Violet Hubbard was one of 20 students killed during the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy in December 2012. A passionate lover of animals, the memory of six-year-old Catherine lives on through the namesake Catherine Violet Hubbard Foundation, an NPO promoting compassion and healing through the power of human-animal connections. It does this mainly via the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary, which we are delighted to recognise in this programme.

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The Catherine Violet Hubbard Foundation was established as a 501 (c) (3) organisation in 2013, before quickly announcing its plans to create the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary, a tribute to a kind, compassionate animal lover whose life was taken from her under the most tragic circumstances. Across 34 acres of state farmland in Connecticut, this beautiful memorial stands for animal welfare, humane education, and environmental stewardship, keeping animals free from harm in homes and their natural habitats.

Animal welfare has always been the primary focus for this sanctuary, which works towards it at every turn. For example, its Senior Paw Project sees approximately 450 pets of financially insecure seniors supported through veterinary wellness, prescriptive care, and monthly food deliveries, aiding wellbeing and keeping the connection with their owners strong.

Similarly, by shining a light on animal rescues, the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal



Sanctuary has seen more than 1,000 animals adopted, thereby addressing some of the major systematic challenges facing the world of animal welfare today.

Concerning humane education, this animal sanctuary prides itself on equipping both children and adults alike with the knowledge and responsibility they need to treat animals humanely and care for the natural world. This is seen through an empathy-based education that aligns with the standards set by both the state and the national curriculum. Examples of this ethos in action include its free and low-cost community programmes, which welcome people of all ages to get inspired and treat animals, others, and the wider planet with love.

Lastly, the third area of focus for this sanctuary is environmental stewardship, especially preserving the 34 acres of open space, woodlands, meadows, and pollinator habitat it has nurtured, with this offering refuge for native wildlife and serving as a living classroom on the importance of conservation. Also, as a certified monarch waystation, firefly, and wildlife habitat, this location is modelling an ecosystem of sustainability and stewardship.

Behind every one of the projects and programmes delivered under these three banners is a team of only seven full-time employees, with their ambition and dedication resulting in an incredible impact that stretches well beyond Connecticut. All of these individuals possess an innate kindness and a shared passion for making the world a better place for all. A sanctuary-wide emphasis on humane values and hands-on experiences help the team to realise this, allowing them to cultivate a generation where kindness is a daily occurrence.



Excitingly, 2026 marks another fantastic year for the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary, which is celebrating the tenth anniversary of the annual Catherine's Butterfly Party in June. Connecticut's largest free day festival focused on pet adoption, the event takes Catherine's eternal love of animals and brings together dozens of rescue organisations and wildlife ambassadors for a day of adoption opportunities, educational demonstrations, and interactive experiences. More than 10,000 people attend yearly.

As part of its anniversary celebrations, this is a year of expansion for the sanctuary, which is honoured to remain alongside the dedicated rescue professionals who save lives every day and are writing the next chapter for those animals looking to find their forever homes. In 2026, this is being expanded nationally to support rescue organisations across the country. This message, 'BRING LOVE HOME – From Newtown to Your Town', is being shared to foster a little extra kindness to fellow animal champions across the US.

Having emerged as a beacon of kindness and innovation in animal welfare, the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary has reached more than 150,000 individuals to date, fostering empathy and environmental responsibility. By addressing the local and national challenges caused by limited access to humane education, financial barriers to responsible pet care, and a cultural disconnect between people, animals, and the environment, the team here are creating learning opportunities, preventing harm, and offering full support.

Creating something magical and truly long lasting from a heartbreaking situation, the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary is a fitting homage to a girl whose name and memory will live on forever. We are thrilled to celebrate its accomplishments with an award in this programme, and we urge everyone to learn more using the link above..

Most Impactful Community Support & Humanitarian Organisation 2026 – Rwanda

Every child deserves access to quality education, good health and nutrition, clean water, and proper sanitation. This starts with ensuring that they grow up within secure and supportive spaces, with communities capable of protecting their rights and guiding their development. Unfortunately, not every child is afforded these rights, and their future is significantly impacted by their current environment. AEE Rwanda is on a mission to change this, delivering supportive services designed to uplift communities and empower Rwandan children to grow, learn, and thrive.

The story of African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) Rwanda began in 1984, with a mission first sparked by its founder, Israel Havugimana. Led by an unwavering commitment to peacebuilding, healing, and reconciliation across Rwanda, Israel established AEE as a missionary organisation aiming to end extreme poverty and injustice through close collaboration with local churches and communities.

For a decade from its inception, AEE Rwanda operated as a small organisation of seven staff until Israel and two other members of the AEE Rwanda team were killed in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi people. In the aftermath of this national tragedy, the survivors reformed and directed AEE Rwanda's mission to the rebuilding of a ravaged country. The Havugimana Israel Guest House at AEE Rwanda's Kabeza Campus honours its first leader's legacy.

Today, AEE Rwanda is an organisation of over two hundred staff with seventeen offices across twenty-eight of Rwanda's thirty districts, with operations including long-term development programmes, peacebuilding, and emergency relief. Its diverse programs aim to ensure that children's rights are fully realised today whilst laying the foundation for them to thrive in the future. AEE Rwanda has dedicated the last four decades to making a sustained, large-scale impact on the wellbeing of thousands of Rwandan children, families, and communities, raising people from material and spiritual poverty regardless of faith or background.

AEE Rwanda structures its programmes around seven core sectors: protection; education; resilience and livelihoods; health and nutrition; humanitarian and emergency relief; mission; and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Each sector has been specifically selected to address a vital aspect of child, family, and community wellbeing, recognising that strong, secure families and communities are essential for nurturing childhood development and protecting their rights.

A large component of AEE Rwanda's success can be attributed to the organisation's approach to delivering care. The team employs a holistic, community-driven, and rights-based methodology that allows it to address the root causes of poverty and rights violations, implementing programmes that recognise and are tailored to the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of the women, children, youths, families, and communities it works with. AEE Rwanda collaborates closely with government ministries and agencies, local authorities, other development actors, and private sector partners to advance Rwanda's national development priorities.

AEE Rwanda's community transformation and socio-economic development initiatives reach every corner of the country. A shining example of its work is the Livelihood and Resilience Programme, an initiative designed to strengthen vulnerable, disaster-prone, or conflict-

affected communities. AEE Rwanda supports these communities in becoming self-reliant through diversifying income, promoting sustainable agriculture, environmental rehabilitation, and building the financial capacity of participants through group savings and widened market access. Strong, resilient families and communities create the environment in which children can flourish, with their fundamental rights provided for.

Of course, the journey is not always easy, and AEE Rwanda has encountered its fair share of obstacles. Along with many NGOs, AEE Rwanda is facing a dramatically changed world, the team struggling with dependency on ever more limited donor funding and grants that restricts the organisation's operational capacity and project implementation. AEE Rwanda is working hard to diversify funding sources, train board members and staff on governance, transparency, and accountability, and leverage local structures and innovation in service delivery.

For more than forty years, AEE Rwanda has played an instrumental role in transforming Rwanda's communities through spiritual, social, and economic development. The organisation has made an unmistakable impact on the wellbeing, happiness, and prosperity of numerous communities, and tens of thousands of families and individuals through its exceptional work and shows no signs of slowing down its mission now. For its substantial contributions towards the holistic development of Rwanda, and the countless lives it has touched on the way, we at Acquisition International are delighted to recognise AEE Rwanda as Rwanda's Most Impactful Community Support and Humanitarian Organisation 2026.

Visit AEE Rwanda's website today to find out how you can help the organisation on its mission for community transformation.

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Leading Humanitarian NPO 2026 – Maryland

Offering a unique, personal response to both hunger and growing unemployment amongst the unhoused community in Maryland, We Are 4 is a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing low-income and displaced individuals across the state with healthy meals, clothing, and support as they transition from a life on the streets into meaningful work. For more on the programmes delivered by this dedicated NPO, we caught up with Deborah McCrayer, its CEO.

Working primarily across the Southern Baltimore City and Anne Arundel communities, We Are 4 supports the homeless populations through two main assistance programmes, a meal programme and its Hire the Homeless employment programme. The first of these runs every other Saturday across the entire state, and has been ongoing since March 2018. It was started as a response to the tremendous hunger that Deborah witnessed first-hand amongst many of the low-income, unhoused individuals in the region.

Less than two years later in January 2020, the Hire the Household programme began, with this tapping into a community of individuals who are often skilled labourers but have fallen out of work as a result of addictions and other such hardships. The seventh edition of the programme started last month, and is seeing people able to earn money whilst improving the neighbourhood in which they live. The programme also extends to cleaning areas of high drug use, removing and disposing of used needles.

“To date we have worked over 3,527 hours, collecting over 37 tonnes of trash and more than 2,500 used needles.”

Alongside these two primary programmes, We Are 4 also takes great pride in supporting other non-profits to bolster the positive impact it has on the community. This includes the team volunteering their time and skills, raising awareness of different causes, and providing in-kind donations of products such as toiletries and resources including outreach brochures. Since this is a non-profit organisation, all of this is made possible by the funding of its generous donors, who are supporting this vital work.

Deborah McCrayer is at the helm here, and she is responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the organisation, all on top of her role as a full-time employee for another company, where she already works 40 hours a week. “The non-profit is my other full-time job”, she explained. There are no paid staff at We Are 4, and the work it does is carried out solely by volunteers, including Deborah herself, who hands out all of the donations and directly supports the homeless every work day.

As part of her duties as CEO, Deborah must also navigate what is the most pressing issue facing both her and almost every other non-profit in operation today: securing consistent and adequate funding. The unpredictable and restrictive nature of the grants that are provided makes it difficult to plan for the future and sustain operations, forcing



Deborah and her team to do more with less. Similarly, attracting and retaining volunteers in some of the areas where the organisation works can be incredibly tough.

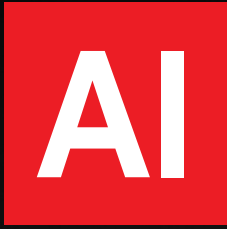
On the back of these challenges, not to mention the US' fluctuating economy, it is unsurprising all of We Are 4's funding is currently sourced directly from Deborah herself. She implores for support from anyone willing to help her cause: “My non-profit organisation needs sponsorship, entrepreneurs who believe in the work and willingness to fund the work. I also need a vehicle to expand the work we do.” Any help is more than deserved, especially since this is the only NPO in the state of Maryland to hire the homeless.

Despite these difficulties, We Are 4 is continuing to drive a lasting impact across the communities it works with, having introduced initiatives including reusing vacant lots to support green neighbourhoods and creating a community vegetable garden. The space for this garden was first acquired by the team in April 2024, and they spent until September last year clearing the debris, moving abandoned vehicles, and having the lot levelled. Then, the trees were trimmed, fences installed, and ten raised garden beds were installed.

2026 will see three water totes mounted, supplying the garden with a total of 990 gallons of water, and vegetables will finally be planted here for the first time. Once it is officially up and running, the garden will help to address food insecurity across Baltimore's Brooklyn neighbourhood. This is just one example of the work that will be taking up the rest of the year for Deborah McCrayer and those who support her cause, and more information on how to volunteer or donate to We Are 4 can be found below.



Contact: Deborah McCrayer
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