



## **News**

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### **New York Edge to Host Spring Gala To Support New York City Students**

***NYC's largest provider of afterschool programming to honor notable individuals for  
commitment to advancing education for youth***

**New York, NY – April 28, 2022 –** [New York Edge](#), the largest provider of school-based afterschool and summer programming in New York City, today announced the honorees of the New York Edge Gala: **Dr. Brian Hainline**, chief medical officer of the NCAA; **Debra OConnell**, president of Networks for Disney Media & Entertainment Distribution; and **Craig Young**, Managing Director, Mid-Atlantic Division Executive at Merrill Lynch.

The 2022 Gala – which will take place on Tuesday, May 10, at Gotham Hall – will honor Dr. Hainline, Ms. OConnell, and Mr. Young for their commitment to improving educational outcomes and empowering young people. Celebrating the profound impact of New York Edge's innovative programs, this year's event will raise critical funds to support the nonprofit, which serves thousands of New York City students across the five boroughs through a multitude of initiatives, including robotics classes, chess club, step club, college and career preparation, and more.

"Brian, Debra, and Peter are outstanding leaders who serve as exceptional role models to so many young people, and we are proud to honor them for their commitment to creating positive change," said **Rachael Gazdick, CEO of New York Edge**. "The funds raised during this year's event will enable us to reach more students and strengthen our afterschool and summer programs, which are critical in helping youth grow, realize their full potential, and pursue successful futures."

The event will feature a performance by GRAMMY-nominated Alphabet Rockers and students from New York Edge's dance and step programs. New York Edge will also present special recognitions to each of the honorees throughout the program.

Dr. Hainline will be honored for his profound work advocating for safety, excellence, and wellness in college student-athletes and encouraging life-long physical and mental development. In addition to overseeing the NCAA Sport Science Institute, he is the immediate past chair of the American Academy of Neurology Sports Neurology section. Dr. Hainline is also a clinical professor of neurology at New York University Grossman School of Medicine and Indiana University School of Medicine.

“I feel privileged to receive this award, especially because of everything that New York Edge represents,” said **Dr. Brian Hainline, chief medical officer of the NCAA**. “The leadership and staff at New York Edge epitomize how we must strive to level the playing field so that all of our youth have the opportunity to develop a sound body and mind.

Ms. OConnell will be recognized for her ongoing support of youth-related charities and her commitment to mentoring. An active participant in The Walt Disney Company’s VolunTEARS program, she’s involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, back-to-school and holiday support for families in need, conversation efforts, and more. Ms. OConnell also works with St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital and Sade Baderinwa’s Get Reel Foundation.

“New York Edge’s focus on weaving leadership and social emotional learning throughout its programming builds resilience in students. This has been incredibly important — especially throughout the pandemic when students needed guidance from coaches, tutors and mentors and NY Edge was there every step of the way both remote or in person,” said **Debra OConnell, president of Networks for Disney Media & Entertainment Distribution**. “Our Disney Networks team – and especially our local ABC station, WABC – are all incredibly proud to support their work with students and the enormous positive impact they have on the community at large.”

Mr. Young will be acknowledged for his work promoting a diverse and inclusive environment in the workplace. He is the executive sponsor of the Merrill Lynch Black/African American Leadership Council and is a member of the Bank of America Black Executive Leadership Council & the Merrill Diversity and Inclusion Council.

“As someone who personally benefited from educational opportunities that put me on the path to where I am today, I have a deep appreciation for the work of New York Edge and am honored to be recognized by the organization,” said **Craig Young, Managing Director, Mid-Atlantic Division Executive at Merrill Lynch**.

The Gala will begin at 6:30 PM with a cocktail reception followed by dinner and the program at 7:30 PM. To learn more, purchase tickets or donate, please [click here](#).

### **About New York Edge**

New York Edge is a non-profit organization and the largest provider of afterschool and summer camp programs in all five boroughs of New York City. With thousands of students in more than 100 schools in grades K-12, New York Edge bridges the opportunity gap faced by students in underinvested communities by strengthening academic performance, health and wellness, self-confidence, and leadership skills for success in life. [www.newyorkedge.org](http://www.newyorkedge.org)

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