



The Valerie Jones-Williams **Meaningful** Educator of the Year Award (Greater Charlotte Area)

Honoring Educators Who Cultivate the Self-Efficacy in Youth Representing Under-Resourced Communities

Quick Summary: AfroCareCLT is proud to host its **3rd Annual Cultural Gala**, presented in partnership with the **Work Meaningful Foundation**, the sponsoring 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Greater Charlotte, NC. Through this work, we have already built a middle school in Ghana and are now in the process of building a tech lab and a new elementary school. As part of this year's celebration, we are honoring outstanding educators in the Greater Charlotte area—each finalist will receive **\$250**, the overall winner will be awarded **\$1,000**, and all finalists will receive **2 complimentary tickets to the Gala (September 19th, 2025)** along with an additional ticket for their nominating Principal or Assistant Principal, plus other value-added items (see below). We are requesting that each **Principal or Assistant Principal** nominate **one educator from their building** who is helping to develop the self-efficacy of youth in underserved communities by September 12th.



The What

The **Valerie Jones-Williams Meaningful Educator of the Year Award** celebrates extraordinary educators in **Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Cabarrus County** who are committed to cultivating the *self-efficacy* of students from under-resourced communities. This annual award is funded by **Work. Meaningful.** and presented in partnership with the **Work Meaningful Foundation** at the [**3rd Annual AfroCareCLT Cultural Gala**](#) on **September 19th, 2025** starting at 6:30pm at Project 658 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

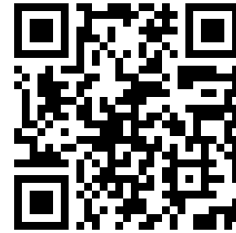
This year's Gala is not only about honoring educators here at home—it's also a celebration of building a **new public middle school in Ghana**, a project fueled by community, culture, and care.

Eligibility & Nomination Process

- Each educator must be **nominated by a Principal, Assistant Principal, or an Administrative Representative of their choosing.**
- Only **one nomination per school building** will be accepted.
- Nominees must currently serve in **Charlotte-Mecklenburg or Cabarrus County schools** and work directly with students in some capacity.
- Nominees must be able to **attend the AfroCareCLT Cultural Gala on September 19th, 2025.**

Applications are due September 12th at 11:59pm EST.
Finalists will be announced by **September 14th at 7:00am EST.**

Nomination Form: <https://forms.gle/oZYzXM5TDpSviVi87>

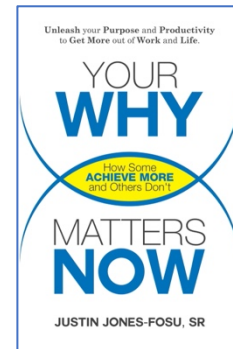


Award Details

We will recognize **4 outstanding finalists** at the Gala:

Finalists (3):

- Complimentary Gala admission with a +1.
- Complimentary Gala admission for their nominating Principal, AP, or chosen administrative representative.
- \$250 to be used for school-related activities and supplies.
- Up to 100 copies of *Your WHY Matters NOW* for their school community, by global keynote speaker and award-winning author **Justin Jones-Fosu.**



Winner (1): Will be announced at the Gala.

- \$1,000 for school-related items and supplies.
- A copy of *Your WHY Matters NOW* for **every educator and custodial staff member** in their building.
- Choice of a complimentary **Professional Development Session or Pep Rally** delivered by **Justin Jones-Fosu.**
- Complimentary Gala admission with a +1.
- Complimentary Gala admission for their nominating Principal, AP, or chosen administrative representative.

Why This Matters

This award is more than recognition—it's a statement of belief. It says:

- We see you.
- We honor the meaningful work you do.
- We celebrate those who cultivate belief in young people, especially in under-resourced communities where hope and opportunity matter most.

About the Gala

The **AfroCareCLT Cultural Gala** is organized by the **AfroCareCLT Collective**, including: **Asanteman Association of the Carolinas, Charlotte Sister Cities, Chef Awo of Eh'Vivi,**



Conscious Filmz, Little Listeners, Marilous Best, My Forking Life, S.A.I.L. Academy, Springclean, Work. Meaningful., Work Meaningful Foundation, and dedicated individuals passionate about education.

This event is also a proud part of the **Charlotte International Arts Festival**.

For more information about the Gala, visit www.AfroCareCLT.org.

Who is Valerie Jones-Williams?

Valerie Jones-Williams was a **30+ year educator** who dedicated her life to enhancing the self-efficacy of youth representing under-resourced communities. She served tirelessly as a high school teacher and through her leadership in **TRIO and Upward Bound programs**, helping high school students from under-resourced communities to excel in school and beyond.

She is also the mother of **Justin Jones-Fosu**, global keynote speaker and founder of Work. Meaningful., who credits her with shaping who he is today. This award honors her enduring legacy of meaningful impact.



Past AfroCareCLT Galas Featured in the Charlotte News

- [Watch Feature #1](#)
- [Watch Feature #2](#)

Selection Criteria

Nominations will be reviewed based on how well the educator demonstrates the following:

1. **Cultivating Self-Efficacy:** Helping students, especially those from under-resourced communities, believe in their own ability to succeed.
2. **Impact on Under-Resourced Communities:** Creating meaningful, measurable outcomes for students who often face the greatest barriers.
3. **Innovation & Creativity:** Using creative, resourceful, or innovative methods to engage and inspire students.
4. **Leadership & Collaboration:** Partnering with colleagues, families, and/or the community to strengthen student success.
5. **Commitment to Equity & Meaningful Work:** Actively promoting equity, inclusion, and opportunities for students to find meaning beyond academics.

Finalists and the award winner will be determined by independent evaluators

Conflict of Interest Statement

To ensure fairness and integrity, all nominations will be reviewed by independent evaluators. No evaluator will:

- Work at a Charlotte-Mecklenburg or Cabarrus County school,
- Have children who currently attend a school in either district, or
- Hold any personal, financial, or supervisory relationship with a nominated educator.

This process ensures that every nomination is reviewed with impartiality and respect.

