



ACE Mentor Program unveils Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholarship

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New York, NY The ACE Mentor Program, a non-profit organization founded by the late structural engineer Dr. Charles Thornton to guide high school students toward careers in design and construction, proudly introduces the Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholarship. This annual \$50,000 scholarship, awarded to a female or non-binary identifying senior pursuing an engineering degree, represents the largest scholarship sponsored by an individual offered by the ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY in its 30-year history.

Victoria Cerami, the benefactor of this scholarship, is a trailblazer in the engineering realm. Assuming leadership of her father's acoustical engineering firm, Cerami and Associates, at just 27 years old, she transformed it into the largest woman-owned engineering firm in North America. Throughout her illustrious career, she consistently epitomized gumption — a unique blend of courage, resourcefulness, and determination that propels individuals to confront challenges head-on.

"I understand the necessity of courage, audacity, and unwavering determination in succeeding within a male-dominated industry, and indeed, in life itself. I owe so much of my success to the people, like Charlie Thornton, who mentored me along the way. I know that Charlie would be so happy to see how his vision of ACE is continuing to grow and expand. I firmly believe that once you achieve success, it's imperative to extend a helping hand to others on their journey — just as Charlie did," said Cerami.

The Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholarship provides not only financial support, but mentorship and guidance to a young individual who has unstoppable energy.

Cerami has consistently demonstrated her commitment to giving back, funding numerous scholarships and mentoring countless young people throughout her career. The \$50,000 Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholarship represents her most substantial contribution to date, as well as the Program's, to a single scholarship recipient, providing an immense boost to one graduating senior in their pursuit of success. Beyond financial aid, the scholarship offers mentoring and networking support to the student throughout their college journey and into the professional sphere. To be eligible, the student must have participated in the ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY for at least two years during high school.

Inaugural Scholarship Award for 2024

Victoria Cerami and the ACE Mentor Program of Greater New York has named Fiona He as the recipient of the 2024 Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholarship. He, a senior at Staten Island Technical High School, will pursue the 4+1 Bachelors/Masters Civil Engineering program at Barnard College and Columbia University.

“As a young girl, the idea of attending a private institution to pursue a STEM-based career seemed unattainable. However, participating in the ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY and learning about Ms. Cerami’s achievements showed me that women can thrive in the architecture and engineering industries. The Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholarship empowers aspiring female engineers, like me, to realize our aspirations,” said He, 2024 Victoria Cerami Gumption Scholar.

He was honored at the ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY’s Scholarship Luncheon on May 16.

Sue Veres Royal, executive director of the ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY, expresses her enthusiasm for He’s achievement and gratitude towards Cerami. “We are delighted for Fiona and deeply appreciative of Victoria’s generosity. Vicki has been a longstanding board member who embodies our organization’s values; she recognizes the transformative power of mentorship on young individuals. Having someone believe in you as a teenager entering college, hoping for a brighter future, instills confidence. This remarkable scholarship alleviates a significant financial barrier for a student to pursue their dreams at the college level.”

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary, the ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY was established in 1994 by a coalition of leading architects, contractors, and engineers in New York City. The program has served over 16,000 students, 80% of whom hail from minority and underserved communities. The ACE Mentor Program of Greater NY has expanded to encompass 51 mentor teams across New York City, Long Island, and Westchester.

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