

BY: Senator PARKER

HONORING Mary Cheng upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the PASEsetter Award by the Partnership for After School Education on February 28, 2023

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Mary Cheng upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the PASEsetter Award by the Partnership for After School Education at its 30th Anniversary PASEsetter Awards Benefit on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at Cipriani, New York, New York; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cheng is receiving this prestigious award for her role as an afterschool educator whose commitment, energy and creativity has had an indelible impact on the children and youth of New York City; and

WHEREAS, PASE is a child-focused organization that promotes and supports quality afterschool programs, particularly those serving young people from underserved communities; Mary Cheng truly exemplifies this vital organization's mission of delivering consistent, high-quality programming to youth and increases their capacity to meet the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, As a first-generation immigrant growing up in Chinatown, Mary Cheng did not always feel like she fit in at school; after being accepted into the Chinese-American Planning Council's (CPC) afterschool program, she discovered the joy of learning while being surrounded by teachers and fellow students she could relate to; and

WHEREAS, The staff at CPC also helped Mary Cheng's family by connecting them with translated information and valuable public resources; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cheng earned her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the City College of New York, followed by a master's degree in Childhood Education from Hunter College; she then returned to CPC and began working as a teacher; and

WHEREAS, For seven years, Mary Cheng was head teacher at Chung Pak Day Care Center, followed by seven years as site director of Little Star of Broome Street Early Childhood Center; in 2018, she was promoted to her current role as Director of Childhood Development Services; and

WHEREAS, In this capacity, Mary Cheng oversees the agency's six

early childhood centers and six afterschool programs located throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, serving over 1,300 children every year; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cheng goes out of her way to train and mentor all teachers and staff at the centers, and to bond with as many students and families as possible; she cooks for the staff at Little Star every Friday, and has organized cooking classes for parents of the students, turkey drives and homemade Thanksgiving dinners for many families during the holiday season; and

WHEREAS, During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mary Cheng diligently worked to keep Little Star open and repurposed it as a regional enrichment center for the community, providing programming and support during a strange and isolating time; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cheng also recruited staff to support the children of essential workers who were a part of CPC, and organized COVID vaccine clinics for parents and staff; and

WHEREAS, Each and every day, Mary Cheng strives to ensure the people around her feel loved and supported; for her steadfast and unrelenting commitment to those individuals, she was named a 2017 Unsung Hero by the Care Council of New York; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of the great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Mary Cheng upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the PASEsetter Award by the Partnership for After School Education; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Mary Cheng.