Senate Resolution No. 1831

BY: Senator MARTINS

COMMENDING Abby Podwall and Keshin Huang, co-founders of SPARKS, for their dedicated service to elementary students in their community

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to act in accord with its long-standing traditions to honor the youth of today, the leaders of tomorrow, whose character and achievements exemplify the ideals and values cherished by this great State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, The character and richness of life in this noble Empire State are nourished and fulfilled through the concern and selfless dedication of those young people who commit their energies and purpose to the enrichment of others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body takes pleasure in commending Abby Podwall and Keshin Huang, co-founders of SPARKS, for their dedicated service to elementary students in their community; and

WHEREAS, In 2024, Abby Podwall and Keshin Huang, students at Great Neck North High School, founded SPARKS (STEM Programs And Resources for Kids by Students), a non-profit program which inspires elementary students through hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) learning experiences; partnering with Adventures in Learning, the program offers engaging activities, led by high school volunteers, to guide young learners; and

WHEREAS, The programs in SPARKS focus on hands-on learning, mentorship, and inspiring the next generation of STEM leaders; every student deserves access to the resources and opportunities that can shape their future, and the program's volunteers are committed to making that a reality; and

WHEREAS, The activities are carefully tailored to the young audience while also teaching the students important problem-solving and scientific thinking skills; some activities include exciting educational experiments which captivate the children's curiosity and foster a passion for STEM subjects; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of two years, SPARKS has organized more than 40 STEM projects for underserved elementary-aged students in the Great Neck, New York, area; the organization has reached approximately 70 volunteers and is beginning to open new chapters in New York State; the program serves schools, community centers, and youth organizations across the region; and

WHEREAS, To fund the program, SPARKS relies on creative and engaging fundraising events; Abby Podwall and Keshin Huang are ambitious about the future of SPARKS and hope to expand their program to more schools in the district, reaching even more children and broadening their impact; they believe that, with time, their efforts can inspire more students to

be passionate about STEM; and

WHEREAS, Although SPARKS is still in its early stages, it has already made a meaningful impact on the local community; by fostering curiosity and providing academic support, SPARKS helps children develop their academic and personal potential; and

WHEREAS, The dedication of Abby Podwall, Keshin Huang, and their team of volunteers shows that high school students can make a significant difference in their communities; programs like SPARKS prove that a passion for learning can inspire others and create lasting change; they hope that SPARKS lights the way for these students to explore their interests and discover a love for STEM; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that, when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, it is appropriate to publicly proclaim and commend those individuals for the edification of others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Abby Podwall and Keshin Huang, co-founders of SPARKS, for their dedicated service to elementary students in their community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Abby Podwall and Keshin Huang.