
Tompkins Community Action

an active community can produce powerful change

2026 JOE CASSANITI COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

The Joe Cassaniti Community Service Award was established at Tompkins Community Action (TCAction) in 1996 by Walter Gangl, attorney, and former Ithaca resident, to honor the work of local businessman and community activist, Joe Cassaniti. Joe has been an ongoing influence in reshaping the West End business district, provided encouragement to dozens of young people in area schools, and inspired citizens all over Tompkins County to “get involved.”

In addition, Joe also spearheaded funding development for the bleachers at the Cass Park Skating Rink, submitted a proposal to the City of Ithaca to bring the public library to the Commons, helped focus constructive attention on crime and drug problems in the downtown area, worked with the Ithaca High School PTA and its projects, and participated in vital issues facing local business and government. Joe is never at a loss for innovative and creative solutions to community problems. One of his foremost reasons for staying involved is his deep commitment to the development of young people. As a former schoolteacher and the father of three, Joe has a wealth of experience in motivating and inspiring youth. Joe is willing to put his words into action and to demonstrate his concern for other people’s welfare.

In keeping with this attitude and vision for the future, the Joe Cassaniti Community Service Award is given annually to a high school senior in Tompkins County who has demonstrated their commitment to the community through volunteerism.

Eligibility: A graduating high school senior in Tompkins County who has demonstrated sustained volunteer work in their school and in their local and/or regional community. Priority will be given to volunteer work completed outside of class requirements.

Award: \$350 cash award to be used by the recipient to further personal, educational, or career goals

Process: A nomination form must be submitted to TCAction for each student nominated. (*Students may self-nominate*) The TCAction Board of Directors will choose a finalist and invite them for an interview if a decision can’t be made.

Deadline: Friday, May 1, 2026

Please direct any questions to info@tcaction.org.

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2026 JOE CASSANITI COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Student Name:

Mailing Address:
Street City Zip

Home Phone: School:

Nominated By:
Name Relationship

Phone E-Mail

Please use the space below to describe your reasons for nominating the student as it relates to volunteer work the student has done.

Please be specific about:

1. When the volunteer work was done
2. Organizations/causes volunteered for
3. Description of project(s) or volunteer activity the student was involved in
4. Who benefited from the work and how did they benefit?
5. Results or outcomes of the activity

The review committee may contact the nominator if there are any follow-up questions.



The awardee and nominator will be invited to a TCAction Board Meeting for award presentation and celebration.

Email/Fax/Mail Nominations to:

Tompkins Community Action, Inc.
701 Spencer Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
Fax: 607-273-3293
E-mail: info@tcaction.org

Nominations must be received by:

Friday, May 1, 2026