



...Because every child deserves a childhood

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ASTOR LEARNING CENTER HONORED AS SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR**

***Special Needs School in Rhinebeck Earns Highest Distinction  
from the National Association of Special Education Teachers***

**Rhinebeck, N.Y. – June 3, 2019** – For the second consecutive year, [Astor Services for Children & Families](http://www.astorservices.org), a non-profit organization that provides mental health services, welfare programs and development programs for children and their families in the Bronx and Hudson Valley, has announced that its Astor Learning Center (ALC) has been selected by the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET) as a 2019-2020 NASET School of Excellence.

The highest level of recognition given by the NASET, the School of Excellence award is bestowed upon select qualified licensed private special education schools that meet rigorous professional criteria and demonstrate exceptional dedication, commitment and achievement in the field of special education.

Established in 1980, ALC was awarded with NASET's School of Excellence award in 2018 and has been named a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education three times. Students who have struggled to succeed in conventional school settings, including children in residence at Astor's Residential Programs in Rhinebeck and day students from nearby counties, take part in intensive, individualized special education classes in ALC's nurturing environment. The school provides constant emotional support, social skills training, speech/language and occupational therapy/counseling and small class sizes of just six to eight students.

"Our staff helps students navigate through school with a highly individualized, caring approach," said Mary Sontheimer, Astor's assistant executive director, education and early childhood development programs. "We are incredibly honored that NASET has once again recognized the efforts of our deeply committed team, who truly dedicate themselves to the children we serve."

**About Astor**

Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families has been providing behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. The organization, which has been accredited with The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval, now serves more than 10,000 children and families annually in more than 70 locations. Astor's range of services in the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties) and the Bronx include: Residential Programs; Early Childhood Programs; and Community-Based Behavioral Health and Prevention Services. Visit the organization online at [www.astorservices.org](http://www.astorservices.org)



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