Minette FOUNDATION

international nonprofit 501(c)(3)

INAUGURAL GALA

2026 COMMEMORATIVE JOURNAL

Expanding Access | Promoting Healing | Reducing Stigma

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2026

VILLA BARONE MANOR | BRONX, NEW YORK

FROM OUR FOUNDERS

A Message of Welcome



Tonight is more than a celebration. It is a reflection of what becomes possible when compassion meets action and a community comes together with a shared commitment to making a difference.

Minette Foundation was born from a simple but powerful belief: everyone deserves access to mental health care, support, dignity, and the resources needed to thrive, regardless of financial circumstances.

Through our work in the Bronx, throughout New York City, and with communities abroad, we witness the resilience of individuals and families facing tremendous challenges. Their stories inspire us to expand access to care, support families, provide essential resources, and reduce mental health stigma.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, donors, partners, volunteers, honorees, and guests. Your generosity helps transform compassion into opportunities for healing and hope.

Thank you for being part of our story and helping us write the next chapter.

With gratitude,

Madeline Maldonado

Madeline Maldonado, LCSW-R
Executive Director & Co-Founder

Mary Taveras Garcia

Mary Taveras Garcia, LCSW-R, CASAC
President & Co-Founder

THE EVENING

Gala Program

Friday, November 13, 2026 • Villa Barone Manor

6:30 PM

Cocktail Hour & Open Bar

Welcome & Opening Remarks

7:30 PM

Dinner

Introduction to Minette Foundation & Our Mission

Foundation Impact Presentation

Honoree & Award Presentations

Sponsor Recognition

Fundraising Appeal

9:00 PM

Featured Entertainment

10:00 PM

Raffle Drawing and Silent Auction

11:15 PM

Closing Remarks

TONIGHT'S HONOREES

Jason Lawrence Butler | Courageous Caregiver Advocacy Award
Benjamin Vabner | Resilience & Self-Advocacy Award
Yoselyn Ynoa | Family Empowerment & Advocacy Award
Michelle Miranda | Caregiver Resilience & Family Wellness Award

OUR MISSION & PURPOSE

Stronger Families. Brighter Futures.

Minette Foundation is a U.S.-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a global vision, founded by Mary Taveras Garcia, LCSW-R, CASAC, and Madeline Maldonado, LCSW-R. We believe that access to mental health care, essential resources, and opportunities for healing should not be determined by where someone lives, their financial circumstances, or the barriers they face.

OUR MISSION	Expanding access. Promoting healing. Reducing stigma. Minette Foundation helps individuals and families overcome barriers to mental health care, autism and developmental evaluations, and essential resources.
WHO WE SERVE	We support individuals and families in New York and beyond, particularly those facing financial hardship, limited access to care, or challenges navigating systems of support.
HOW WE HELP	In New York, we work directly with individuals and families to expand access to affordable mental health services, autism and developmental evaluations, parent support groups, educational workshops, and essentials such as food, clothing, toys, and baby supplies. All of our services are offered in English and Spanish. We also support the providers who serve our communities through professional development trainings and wellness events.
BEYOND BORDERS	We collaborate with healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and grassroots initiatives abroad to expand mental health education, strengthen family and community support systems, and connect vulnerable populations with essential services.
OUR VISION	Stronger families, greater opportunities, healthier communities, and a brighter tomorrow for every person we serve. Whether supporting a family in the Bronx or building partnerships with communities abroad, our purpose remains the same: to remove barriers, promote healing, and strengthen families.

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO MINETTE PSYCHOTHERAPY

Minette Foundation is the nonprofit arm of Minette LCSW Psychotherapy Services, PLLC, founded by Madeline Maldonado and Mary Taveras Garcia. The Foundation extends the practice's commitment to culturally responsive, accessible care to families who might otherwise go without it.

OUR ORIGIN STORY

A Seed Was Planted

By Madeline Maldonado, LCSW-R | Executive Director & Co-Founder

In October 2024, I traveled to the Dominican Republic at the invitation of my close friend, and now Minette Foundation board member, Kamille Dean, Esq. The trip, organized by Pastor Nicole Crank of Faith Church, introduced us to two extraordinary organizations: Hogar Madelaes and the Centro de Corrección y Rehabilitación Najayo Mujeres.

Although I am the daughter of two Dominican immigrants, a Dominican citizen, and a frequent visitor to the island, this trip was profoundly different. Driving toward Najayo Mujeres, I saw communities deeply affected by poverty, and my eyes kept returning to the women and children along the road.

Inside the correctional facility, I was struck by the dignity and commitment of the administrators, guards, and kitchen staff, who prayed with us before the event began. When 200 women gathered for Pastor Nicole's sermon, nearly all of them raised their hands when asked if they were mothers. I saw pain in their eyes, but also resilience. Later, administrators shared their greatest needs: toiletries, hygiene products, medicines, and a strong mental health program. They were grateful for faith-based support but lacked the training and funding to meet the women's emotional and psychological needs.

That afternoon, at Hogar Madelaes, we met Doña Maria Elena, her staff, and the children in their care. The home was spotless and full of love, yet resources were scarce. There were no laptops for homework, air conditioners stayed off because the electricity was too expensive, toys and playground equipment were worn down, and several toddlers napped on sheets placed directly on the tile floor because sleeping mats were unavailable.

That evening, as I told Kamille how deeply moved I was, she looked at me and said, "You can do what Pastor Nicole did today. This is your community, your country. These are your people." **A seed was planted.**

When I returned to New York, I shared everything I had witnessed with Mary Taveras Garcia, along with my growing desire for Minette Psychotherapy to create a nonprofit arm dedicated to global healing and access to care. Mary listened, felt the urgency with me, and immediately said, "Let's do it." That seed became Minette Foundation.

2024
OCTOBER
Trip to the Dominican Republic

2025
OUTREACH
Mats and toiletries sent to Hogar Madelaes

2025
DECEMBER 20
Official launch fundraiser

2026
MARCH
Ghana partnership begins

2026
EXPANSION
Autism support services, with Autism Speaks

2026
NOVEMBER 13
Inaugural Gala

LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors

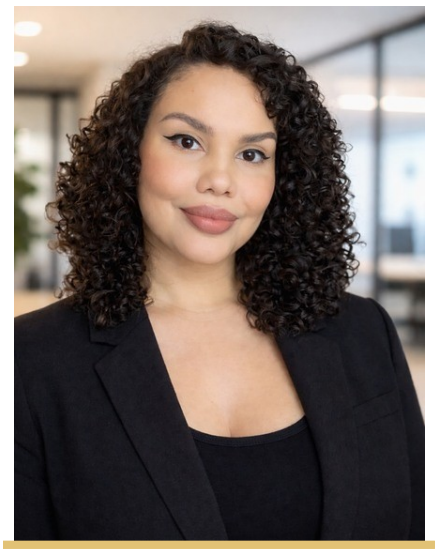
The people helping guide our mission and community commitments.



Madeline Maldonado, LCSW-R
Executive Director & Co-Founder



Mary Taveras Garcia, LCSW-R, CASAC
President & Co-Founder



Nerys Maldonado, BA
Treasurer



Samantha Garcia, MAcc
Secretary



Kamille Dean, Esq.
Board Member



Pia Alexander, LMFT Clinical Fellow
Board Member

OUR WORK IN ACTION

Healing Begins at Home

Local programs, education, connection, and family support



Healthy Moms, Strong Families workshop with Hispanic Federation



Minette and community partners working together



Autism Support Services for Families

No-cost support for Bronx families with children ages 0–5 who have an autism diagnosis or suspected autism. Families may receive up to five support visits by phone, video, or in person, with help accessing early childhood services, evaluations and therapies, parenting strategies, benefits, and community resources. Insurance is not required. Offered in partnership with Autism Speaks' Autism Response Team.

Parent Support Groups

Online weekly groups for parents and caregivers of children with special needs, including a 15-session curriculum for parents navigating autism. Families connect, share experiences, and learn practical strategies. Open enrollment, September through May, offered with Minette Psychotherapy. Insurance is accepted, and the Foundation covers fees for parents and caregivers without health insurance.

Mental Health Workshops

Bilingual workshops providing education, support, and practical tools for new and expecting parents, community members, healthcare and mental health providers, and teaching professionals.

ALL OF OUR SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN

English & Spanish

PRACTICAL HELP

Compassion in Action

Removing barriers to care so families can focus on healing

Donations of Food, Clothing, Toys & Baby Supplies

We distribute food, clothing, toys, and baby items generously donated to the Foundation to individuals and families in need.

Help Funding Therapy for Uninsured or Underinsured People

We help individuals and families access mental health therapy when cost is a barrier.

Help Accessing Diagnostic Evaluations

We support families in obtaining diagnostic evaluations for autism and other developmental disabilities and connect them to resources and next steps.



Distributing baby supplies during the maternal mental health workshop with Hispanic Federation

900	16	8
LIVES TOUCHED	VOLUNTEERS	LOCAL & GLOBAL PARTNERS

> *Together, we can reduce stigma, promote healing, and ensure every human being has the opportunity to reclaim their story and shape a brighter future.*

BEYOND BORDERS

Dominican Republic

Supporting women, children, and families through donations and community connection



Najayo Mujeres outreach



Donated nap mats at Hogar Madelaes



Hogar Madelaes community

In 2025, we shipped nap mats and toiletries to Hogar Madelaes, which sent photos and videos confirming their arrival. In 2026, donations from our Spring Fundraiser filled nine extra-large boxes sent to Madelaes with clothing, shoes, hygiene products, toys, books, and more. In August 2026, we helped fund Sanandome's Frontera de Amor project in Independencia Province, providing school backpacks, free medical services, and support for children with autism.

The faces of children in these images have been modified to protect their privacy and identity.

BEYOND BORDERS

Ghana

Standing with women and girls in partnership with SparkLife International, a 501(c)(3) organization based in the United States and Ghana.



International Women's Day celebration with SparkLife International



Sharing gifts with community members



Sewing machines for five women starting home-based businesses



Hygiene supplies ready for distribution



Students with menstrual hygiene products, SparkLife's 9th Annual Hygiene Project, Oti Region



Presenting hygiene supplies to students, September 2026

Our partnership with SparkLife International began in March 2026, when Minette Foundation sponsored its International Women's Day celebration and funded five sewing machines for women starting home-based seamstress businesses. We also supported its book fundraiser for Footsteps in the Dark and, in September 2026, joined its 9th Annual Hygiene Project, funding menstrual hygiene products for adolescent girls in Ghana's Oti Region.

All photos were shared by SparkLife International and approved for resharing.

CELEBRATING OUR HONOREES

Honoree Stories

Courage, resilience, advocacy, and family empowerment

JASON LAWRENCE BUTLER

Courageous Caregiver Advocacy Award

Jason is a retired NYPD officer, a father of four (two boys and two girls), and a grandfather to one granddaughter. His teenage daughter has autism and 7q11.23 duplication syndrome (Dup7), a rare genetic condition that makes her needs especially complex. For years, he has advocated for her educational, medical, and support needs, challenging school-placement decisions, appealing insurance denials, and navigating complex systems. He also recognizes the emotional demands of caregiving and the importance of mental health support for parents.

Jason asked that the truth of his family's experience be shared, because it reflects the reality many parents of children with disabilities face. Meeting his daughter's significant psychiatric and educational needs required great sacrifice: this year, he failed several classes and was asked to leave law school in his 2nd year of attendance. He is proud of that journey. It makes him work harder to meet his goals and keep advocating for his daughter and other people with disabilities, and he is now in the process of resuming his law school education.

> **WHY WE HONOR JASON:** His perseverance reflects the challenges autism families face in securing appropriate services, and his honesty about the personal cost underscores the need for family navigation, parent education, and caregiver wellness.

BENJAMIN VABNER

Resilience & Self-Advocacy Award

Benjamin is a marketing operations and project management professional, entrepreneur, and advocate for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ADHD, and mental health challenges. He hosts the Autism Experience Podcast and shares insights on workplace culture, career development, and neurodivergence with more than 10,000 LinkedIn followers.

Through Minette Foundation's partnership with Minette Psychotherapy, its affiliated therapy practice, Benjamin has maintained continuity of mental health care despite financial challenges over the past two years, challenges shared by many Americans. He advocates for affordable evaluations, treatment, and supportive services across the lifespan.

> **WHY WE HONOR BENJAMIN:** His story reminds us that autism does not end in childhood, and neither does the need for understanding and support. His achievements challenge limiting assumptions about neurodivergent individuals and show why removing financial barriers to mental health care matters.

CELEBRATING OUR HONOREES • CONTINUED

Honoree Stories

Courage, resilience, advocacy, and family empowerment

YOSELYN YNOA

Family Empowerment & Advocacy Award

Yoselyn is a social worker, autism parent, caregiver to her own mother, and creator of Beyond the Journey Family Resources and Support. Drawing on her personal experience navigating services, she develops practical educational guides and bilingual resources in English and Spanish. Her work helps families understand autism, locate support, and advocate with greater confidence.

> **WHY WE HONOR YOSELYN:** She transforms her lived experience and professional knowledge into bilingual, culturally responsive tools that empower families and strengthen community support.

MICHELLE MIRANDA

Caregiver Resilience & Family Wellness Award

Michelle is a dedicated autism parent who balances family responsibilities, work, and advocacy. She participated in a parent support group through Minette Psychotherapy, finding connection and encouragement among other caregivers. After a period of prioritizing her family's immediate needs, she chose to renew her commitment to her own emotional well-being.

> **WHY WE HONOR MICHELLE:** Her journey honors the strength of autism parents and reminds us that caregiver mental health, therapy, and peer connection are essential to family wellness.

Minette Foundation is the nonprofit arm of Minette LCSW Psychotherapy Services, PLLC, founded by Madeline Maldonado and Mary Taveras Garcia. Honorees' therapy and support-group experiences were received through Minette Psychotherapy with the Foundation's support.

WITH GRATITUDE TO THOSE INVESTING IN ACCESS, HEALING & HOPE

Our Financial Sponsors

HOPE BUILDER | $2,500

Minette LCSW Psychotherapy Services, PLLC

Founded by Madeline Maldonado, LCSW-R, and Mary Taveras Garcia, LCSW-R, CASAC, Minette provides culturally responsive therapy, autism and developmental evaluations, workshops, and groups for individuals, children, couples, and families, with a focus on BIPOC, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ communities. Minette Foundation is its nonprofit arm. Proud sponsor of the Foundation's 2025 launch.

minettepsychotherapy.com | @minettepsychotherapy

HEALING PARTNER | $1,000

Alta Vida Wellness Psychotherapy & Consultation LCSW-PLLC

Founded by Yurilka Hernandez, LCSW, these organizations advance accessible mental health care, wellness education, and professional development.

altavidawellness.org | psychotherapy-today.com

HEALING PARTNER | $1,000

Miles of Smiles Playhouse

Bronx group family daycare providing inclusive learning, sensory resources, and onsite Early Intervention support.

718-684-2027 | Miles of Smiles Facebook

CONTINUED | WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION

Our Financial Sponsors

HEALING PARTNER | $1,000

Hispanic Federation

A national nonprofit advancing Latino communities through education, healthcare, civic engagement, and economic empowerment.

hispanicfederation.org | @hispanicfederation

FRIEND OF MINETTE | $500

Jared & Jaeden Making a Difference LLC

Founded by Sharon Nuñez, LCSW, offering mental health and family support, Early Intervention evaluations, bariatric evaluations, and counseling in English and Spanish.

psychologytoday.com/profile/1615391 | (929) 674-6042

THANK YOU FOR MAKING HEALING POSSIBLE

Every sponsorship helps advance Minette Foundation’s mission to expand access to mental health care, support families, and provide essential resources to communities in need.

WITH GRATITUDE

Partners in Collaboration

These organizations believe in our mission and hope for change.

Autism Speaks
NATIONAL PARTNER

Through its Autism Response Team and a generous grant, we established Autism Support Services for Families, serving Bronx families with children ages 0–5.

Beantown Community Initiatives
NEW YORK CITY

Helps deliver diapers, baby supplies, and toys to families through onsite distributions and home visits. Partner in our October 2026 maternal mental health workshop. Joins us in this fall's Lucha Contra el Hambre food campaign.

Hope Near Me Mobile Food Pantry
FRESH FOOD, WITH DIGNITY

Brings fresh, nutritious food directly into communities. This summer it distributed more than $13,000 worth of food with sponsors including Minette Foundation and Hispanic Federation. Joins us in this fall's Lucha Contra el Hambre food campaign.

Sanandome, Inc.
UNITED STATES & DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A 501(c)(3) serving children and families in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic since 2005. We helped fund its August 14, 2026 Frontera de Amor project in Independencia Province.

Hispanic Federation
NATIONAL PARTNER

Partner in our maternal mental health workshops (December 2025 and October 2026). Donated the diapers and baby supplies we distribute with community partners and joins us in this fall's Lucha Contra el Hambre food campaign. Also a Healing Partner sponsor.

Miles of Smiles Playhouse
BRONX, NEW YORK

A Bronx group family daycare, that assists with diaper and baby-supply distributions. Trusted partner for our families needing inclusive daycare services. Also a Healing Partner sponsor.

Hogar Madelaes
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A home in La Victoria for up to 40 girls who are orphaned or living in extreme poverty. We shipped nap mats and toiletries in 2025 and nine extra-large boxes of essentials in 2026.

SparkLife International
GHANA

A United States- and Ghana-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit empowering women and girls. We sponsored its 2026 International Women's Day celebration, funded five sewing machines, and supported its hygiene project.



Madeline Maldonado with Beantown Community Initiatives at Miles of Smiles Playhouse

THIS NOVEMBER

Minette Foundation, Beantown Community Initiatives, and Hope Near Me will distribute fresh food and essential resources to underserved families through Hispanic Federation's Lucha Contra el Hambre campaign.

WITH GRATITUDE

Creative, Production & Event Partners

With gratitude to the creative teams and professionals who bring our celebration to life.

NOM MEDIA Honoree Tribute Video Sponsor	**THE EDIT VAULT** Gala Slideshow Production Partner
DANCERS DREAMZZZ Featured Entertainment Partner	 **CRISTEL DALMISER** Featured Musical Performance Partner
R CREATIVE PRODUCTIONS Photography & Videography Partner	 **DJ LESLY** Official Gala DJ
PLATE & PLUME Event Coordination & Planning	**SOBRO GARDEN EVENTS** Audiovisual Production Partner

A special thank-you to Antoinette Sturdivant of Plate & Plume. With heartfelt gratitude for her dedication, creativity, attention to detail, and invaluable support in bringing the Minette Foundation Inaugural Gala to life.

SILENT AUCTION & RAFFLE CONTRIBUTORS

Generosity in Action

SILENT AUCTION



Alvin Clayton, Artist
“Worship,” original oil on canvas, 24x20. Represented by Mackey Twins Gallery
Estimated value: $3,000

Siembra Today
Private healing experience for up to 7; book bundle • Estimated value: $900

Twin Jewelers
14K gold over Argentine silver 22” Miami Cuban unisex chain with hand-set pavé design
Estimated value: $700

Zuma New York
Omakase dinner and wine pairing for two • Estimated value: $600

Topgolf Mount Laurel
12-person event; 2 hours, food and soft drinks • Estimated value: $800

RAFFLE

Core Nutrition & Wellness
Wellness and aesthetics gift certificate • Estimated value: $150

Bronx Wellness Center
Acupuncture and therapeutic massage certificates • Estimated value: $245 combined

Jossinamía Aesthetics
Facial and underarm laser treatment • Estimated value: $250

William “Tony” Dean & Robert Schwendel
EXIT Realty Premier | Real Estate A-Team
Two-night getaway at Motel Luzerne, nestled in the Adirondack region of Lake Luzerne, New York.
Estimated value: $300

ADDITIONAL RAFFLE PRIZES

Samsung 50-inch TV (value: $399) and **Sony ULT FIELD 3 waterproof speaker (value $209)**, donated by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

COMING UP

What's Next

Three ways to be part of the work ahead.



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21 | 12 PM

Free Fresh Groceries: Feeding 1,000 Families

Minette Foundation joins Hope Near Me Mobile Food Pantry, Hispanic Federation, Beantown Community Initiatives, and the New York City Housing Authority for a free fresh grocery distribution at Bronx River Houses, 1619 E 174th St, Bronx, NY 10472. Noon, while supplies last.

To help feed 1,000 families, visit hopenearme.org.

NEW AND ONGOING GROUPS

Parent Support Groups

Mothers' Support Group. A safe space for mothers to share experiences, gain practical strategies, and build community. In-person or virtual, 60-minute sessions with open enrollment. **Groups start in December 2026.** Register with Minette Foundation: 201-724-5489 | minettefoundation@gmail.com.

Online Support Group for Parents Navigating Autism. A 15-session, expert-led curriculum in weekly 60-minute sessions. Join anytime. Insurance is accepted, and Minette Foundation covers fees for parents and caregivers without health insurance.

Online Support Group for Parents of Children with Special Needs. An ongoing weekly group with open enrollment and no long-term commitment, held September through May. Insurance is accepted, and Minette Foundation covers fees for parents and caregivers without health insurance.

To register for the online parents' groups, contact Mary Taveras Garcia, LCSW-R: 201-724-5489 | mary.minettetherapy@gmail.com.

NEW FUNDRAISER

Navidad en Najayo

This holiday season, we are raising funds to send toiletries and hygiene essentials to the women at Centro de Corrección y Rehabilitación Najayo Mujeres: toilet paper, menstrual products, soap, shampoo, conditioner, and lotion, plus two much-needed electric washing machines for the facility. Administrators first shared their need for toiletries and hygiene products during our visit in October 2024, and they shared their current needs with us in phone meetings in October 2026.

To help, give at minettefoundation.org/donate or contact 201-724-5489 | minettefoundation@gmail.com

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Because of You, Hope Grows

To every sponsor, donor, honoree, volunteer, partner, and guest: thank you. Your support helps build a community in which individuals and families can access care, feel seen, and find meaningful support.

Ways to Give

We believe that healing is a collective effort and that access to mental health care and essential resources is a human right, not a privilege. Whether you are a healthcare professional, educator, student, advocate, or community member, there is a place for you in this work.

FREQUENCY

One time	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly

AMOUNT

$50	$100	$250	$500	$1,000	$1,500
$2,500	$3,000	$7,500	$25,000	Other	



SCAN TO DONATE

Your generosity makes healing possible.

minettefoundation.org/donate

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Give essentials. Donated non-perishable food, clothing, coats, toys, books, and baby supplies go directly to families in need.

Volunteer or partner with us. We collaborate with volunteers, organizations, providers, and community leaders locally and abroad.

Minette
FOUNDATION
international nonprofit 501(c)(3)

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR STORY

Expanding Access | Promoting Healing | Reducing Stigma

www.minettefoundation.org

Support our mission: minettefoundation.org/donate

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