

Mentoring and social mobility celebrated

Monday 16 December, 2024

Urban Synergy hosted its annual UShine Awards Ceremony 2024 late last month, bringing together inspiring role models, corporate partners, teachers, and mentors, and the charity's supporters to celebrate the remarkable achievements of young people and the volunteers who empower them.

Hosted by our Patron, the broadcaster Eddie Nestor MBE and Darae Palmer, the ceremony, held at Salesforce's beautiful Ohana Room in London, honoured outstanding individuals across various categories, recognising their contributions to mentorship, leadership, social mobility and diversity.

So often we hear about the cost of living crisis, food banks and crime. Today, the charity celebrates the young people and their supporters who are creating safer, happier communities.

The UShine Awards highlight Urban Synergy's mission of empowering underrepresented young people to unlock their potential and achieve their goals. "Choosing the winners was incredibly hard from among all of our young people and supporters.

We would have loved to invite everyone to our event and truly value each person's contribution. However, due to limited venue capacity, we are unfortunately unable to extend an invitation to all of the Urban Synergy 'family'.

The winners

Teacher Advocacy Award

[Holly Power](#), Principal, [Aquinas Campus Christ The King Sixth Form College](#)

"Holly has helped hundreds of students by involving them in corporate insight days, taking them into companies. She's grown the Urban Synergy programme, and as senior leadership is leading from the front"

Star Mentee

[Chibi Ajero](#), Mentee Alumni & L6 Apprentice, Finance & Investment, [Bloomberg](#)

"He's amazing. Never met anyone so determined, motivated and who wants to suck in information"

Outstanding Role Model

[Sharon Blackman, OBE](#), Managing Director, Global Head of Services Legal, [Citi](#)

"I really like the time that she spends with students."

"She is literally a rock star!"

Mentor Award

[Awah Tumban](#), Collateral & Liquidity Management, [LSEG](#)

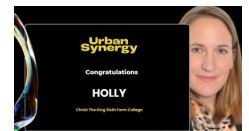
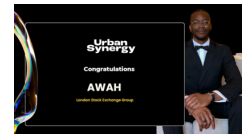
"Given the role he has at LSEG, he's really impressive that he finds time to mentor and support so many young people."

Work Experience Hero Award

[Jacqueline Alcindor](#), Global Diversity & Inclusion Programme Partner, [Legal & General Investment Management \(LGIM\)](#)

"Jaquiline (sic) dedicates so much time, and is helping the charity on multiple touch points, even running in the charity's 5K Battersea Park Run."

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Paul Lawrence Award

Jadon Black, Management Consultant Apprentice, [PwC](#)

“Jadon consistently plays it forward, he’s looking out for other young people behind him climbing up the ladder of life!”

Thank you to our independent judging panel for your thoughtful deliberation and to everyone who made this year’s awards possible. Your contributions ensure that young people from underrepresented communities continue to thrive and achieve their fullest potential. Learn about [all of the finalists](#).

The Urban Synergy “UShine” judges - all social mobility and diversity champions in their own right - came from Thomson Reuters, Deutsche Bank, Deloitte, Barclays, PwC, Goldman Sachs, and Bloomberg.

Urban Synergy extends heartfelt gratitude to its generous sponsors for making the UShine Awards possible:

- **Gold Sponsors:** [Boku](#)
- **Silver Sponsor:** [Moody's](#) and [Salesforce](#)
- **Bronze Sponsors:** [Aegon](#), [25 Bedford Row](#) and [Newflex](#)

And [Brentford FC](#) and [Tottenham Hotspur](#) for their kind donations to our auction, along with the Chair of our Corporate Advisory Board, David Craig.

About Our Sponsors:

- **Boku:** A leading global mobile payments company, Boku connects billions of consumers worldwide with innovative payment solutions. CEO Stuart Neal says, “Boku is proud to support Urban Synergy in empowering young people to thrive and break barriers.”
- **Salesforce:** As a leader in customer relationship management (CRM), Salesforce is committed to building a future driven by equity and inclusion.
- **Moody's:** A global integrated risk assessment firm, Moody's supports initiatives that advance education and opportunity for underrepresented communities.
- **Aegon:** With a long history of helping people achieve financial security, Aegon champions initiatives that promote education and social mobility. “We’re honoured to support the next generation of leaders through Urban Synergy.”
- **25 Bedford Row:** is committed to increasing access to, and diversity within our Chambers and the wider legal profession. “We are therefore delighted to sponsor and support Urban Synergy, a charity which aligns with Chambers’ ethos in this regard, and which has actively assisted us in our aim to promote greater equality and diversity in our profession.”
- **XCHG NewFlex:** is a leading UK flexible workspace provider, whose locations are used by innovative, next generation companies to facilitate their growth. “We are proud to support Urban Synergy in empowering young people as we believe that today's students are the entrepreneurs and business leaders of tomorrow.”

About the Awards

- **Teacher Advocacy Award:** Recognises teachers who have gone above and beyond to advocate for their students’ success and empower them to achieve their full potential.
- **Star Mentee Award:** Honours individuals who have inspired and guided young people through their dedication, achievements, and mentorship.
- **Outstanding Role Model Award** - Recognises mentors who have made a significant impact on the lives of mentees, offering invaluable guidance and support.
- **Mentor Award** - An Urban Synergy mentee who has excelled in their participation in our programmes, demonstrating commitment, growth, and achievement.
- **Work Experience Hero Award**
An individual that has provided transformative work experience opportunities for young people.
- **Paul Lawrence Award** - The late Paul Lawrence was an author, a senior programme manager, community leader and a co-founder of 100 Black Men, and a great friend of Urban Synergy’s. Named in honour of Paul’s legacy, this award celebrates extraordinary contributions to Urban Synergy’s mission, showcasing dedication to social mobility and youth empowerment.

Urban Synergy’s CEO, **Leila Thomas**, expressed her gratitude to all the nominees, judges, and sponsors: “The UShine Awards highlight the power of mentorship and the incredible potential of young

people when they're given the opportunity to shine. Thank you to our sponsors and supporters for joining us in this movement to create social mobility and empowerment."

For more information about Urban Synergy and the UShine Awards, visit www.urbansynergy.com.

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