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For Immediate Release

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County Residents Named Community Champion

Community Champions Honored at 25th Annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards, April 21

Fairfax, VA – (April 24, 2017) Volunteer Fairfax and Chairman Sharon Bulova and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors honored the 2017 Community Champions in their Districts at the Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards on April 21. With the theme, *Volunteers, the roots of our strong community*, the event welcomed nominees, community members and leaders of business, government and nonprofits to celebrate volunteerism. The event was held at The Waterford, (Springfield, VA). Jeff Goldberg, Virginia Bureau Chief for ABC7/WJLA and News Channel 8, returned as event emcee.

Volunteer Fairfax sincerely thanks the generous sponsors of the Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards. They include: Silver Sponsor, FVCbank and Bronze Sponsors, Access National Bank, Capital One, Dominion, Eagle Ray, Inc., Leidos, NFP, Vinny & Ellen Sica, and Universal Title.

Each year, the members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors have the honor of selecting a citizen volunteer within their District to be recognized with a Community Champions Award. This distinguished award recognizes volunteers who are committed to improving Fairfax County through their dedicated efforts of bringing the community together in order to work towards a common goal of addressing the concerns of County residents.



Here are the stories behind the Community Champions Awards:

Supervisor John Cook Honors David Curtis, Braddock District

The Turkey Run Stream flows through the shared open parklands that are the pride and joy of the Truro community. Over the years, the stream suffered from serious runoff problems, loss of habitat, unstable trees, poor water quality, and exposed public utility infrastructure. In 2008, David Curtis became chair of the Truro Homes Association and the stream began to thrive once more. David spearheaded the Turkey Run Stream Restoration project where he led the “Stream Team”, to serve as a liaison between the county and the homeowners. The project, which is expected to be completed in





June, is an outstanding example of how a publicly-funded restoration project can be done on private property. **Supervisor Cook says, "Without Dave's dedication and commitment, this vital stream restoration project, which benefits not just the Truro Homeowners Association but the entire Accotink Creek watershed, would not have moved forward. His work has resulted in long-lasting improvements that not only make the community a better place to live, but protects the environment."**

Supervisor John Foust Honors Penny Halpern, Dranesville District

Penny Halpern has been the motivating force behind the Herndon Village Network since she began serving as Board President in 2013. Herndon Village Network is a grassroots, neighbor-to-neighbor, nonprofit initiative which strives to support Herndon senior citizens. Penny has been instrumental in establishing the volunteer program which matches members unable to drive with volunteers who provide transportation to medical appointments, social engagements, and the Herndon Senior Center. Without this program, members could not get where they need to go. But Penny's volunteer service does not stop there. Since 1980, Penny has been an adult volunteer with the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital. Penny has dedicated years promoting the organization and supporting their mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character. Many girls have been fortunate to have Penny involved in their lives.



Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust says, "Ms. Halpern is a tireless advocate for both young girls and older residents, giving of her time and time again without the need for accolades or applause."

Supervisor Cathy Hudgins Honors Raul and Maria Garza-Chapa, Hunter Mill District

For many years, Raul and Maria Garza-Chapa have volunteered their services to a host of community groups and activities. Both help to support various programs for active seniors at the Reston Community Center. Specifically, they are involved in programs such as the Center Stage Movies, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Thanksgiving Food Drive, and senior socials. In addition to their work with the Reston Community Center, the two have volunteered over the years for the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce offering support to Taste of Reston, OctoberFest, and Ethics Day at South Lakes High School. Raul and Maria have not let anything slow down their dedication to their community, especially for Fairfax County's senior population. **As Supervisor Hudgins notes, "They are a true example of how individuals can make a difference by selflessly giving their time and talents. As senior citizens, they continually contribute to the greater good of the community."**





Supervisor Jeff McKay Honors Michel Margosis, Lee District

Michel Margosis has dedicated his life to making the world a better place for everyone. He has spent more than a quarter-century ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust is not forgotten. Margosis, a Holocaust survivor himself, focuses on planning the "Day of Remembrance," the nation's annual commemoration of the Holocaust and often speaks to his personal experiences. His message is an important one: "Do not forget the horrors of the past and do not allow them to happen again in the future." Margosis has also served as the Lee District appointee on the Human Rights Commission for 13 years, working tirelessly to protect the rights and freedoms of everyone in our community. Michel's service doesn't stop there. He also volunteers with numerous groups within his retirement community, Greenspring Village, including leading a French Discussion Group, guiding tours of the Holocaust Museum, and helping to start a Parkinson's Support group. ***As best put by Supervisor McKay, "Michel Margosis is more than a Community Champion; he is a Holocaust survivor and a hero. He has touched the lives of millions while reminding us all that there is no place for any kind of discrimination - whether racial, religious, or social."***



Supervisor Penny Gross Honors Gail Coleman, Mason District

Gail Coleman has tirelessly dedicated eight years to the Annandale Christian Community for Action, better known as ACCA, assisting the elderly to medical appointments, helping clients obtain rental and utility assistance, and managing a food pantry for individuals and families. Gail has served in various roles including food captain, chair of the transportation committee, and the ACCA president. In addition to her work with ACCA, Gail works with the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, to raise money and attention to the need for more research and a cure for this deadly disease that claimed the lives of her parents and her husband. In all of her volunteer work, Gail not only provides leadership, but also takes on everyday tasks. She identifies a need - large or small - and steps up to address it. ***Supervisor Gross tells us "Gail, a lawyer by training, provides quiet, thoughtful leadership for the all-volunteer ACCA. Fairfax County's colorful tapestry is greatly enhanced by dedicated volunteers like Gail Coleman."***





Supervisor Daniel G. Storck Honors Whitney Minnich, Mount Vernon District

Whitney Minnich took over the Bucknell Manor Neighborhood Watch Program in the spring of 2014. Since then, she has worked vigorously to improve safety and address crime in her community. Whitney started by hosting a basic neighborhood watch training in her home that was attended only by a handful of people. Her meetings soon grew into one of the largest neighborhood watch programs in the Mount Vernon District. Whitney does exceptional job as a community liaison with the police department, sharing information to prevent crime and handle any concerns in her neighborhood. Alongside her co-coordinator, Whitney also organizes Bucknell Manor's National Night Out which is one of the most attended and successful events the Mount Vernon District. Her planning of this annual event reinforces her unwavering dedication to bringing together the local community. Whitney volunteers numerous hours to make her neighborhood a better and safer place to live. ***"Mrs. Minnich exemplifies the significant impact one individual can have on an entire community."*** says Supervisor Storck. ***"She has created relationships and community connections that are a model for all of us."***



Supervisor Linda Q. Smyth Honors Friends of Oakton Library, Providence District

In the 1990s, Friends of Oakton Library charter members began their quest to establish a local library. In a historic public-private partnership with a developer, three acres were dedicated to the facility. In 2004, Fairfax County taxpayers approved a bond referendum to build the Oakton Library which opened its doors in September 2007. Friends of Oakton Library has never wavered from their original mission to support and enhance library resources and services, as well as foster a strong connection between the library and the local community. Every day the groups come to the library to receive, sort and box thousands of books donated to the public. And each year the volunteers manage and run book sales, which, alongside membership fees and generous donations, help enable the Oakton Library to provide excellent services to the community. Friends of Oakton Library consistently exceed expectations with their generous enthusiasm, financial support, tireless work, and personal commitment. These volunteers have created a gathering place where people can come and enjoy the library resources.

As Supervisor Smyth says, "The Friends of Oakton Library became an active organization before there was a building or books. They started off with nothing but an idea and a piece of dirt. Literally from the ground up, the Friends built a library that has been the focal point for the Oakton community for the last 10 years."





Supervisor Pat Herrity Honors John Pellegrin, Springfield District

John Pellegrin has volunteered for 16 years with the Rotary Club of West Springfield, dedicating 500 hours to the organization in 2016. Over the course of John's Rotary journey, he has participated in all aspects of the Rotary Club of West Springfield's service projects. Recently, John has organized several "Service above Self: Outstanding First Responder of the Year" awards to honor our public safety employees. In 2016, he organized an awards ceremony for three EMS technicians and one police officer who serve the West Springfield area. John's efforts have demonstrated how proud the Fairfax Community is of our public safety employees as well as boosting community and employee morale. **Supervisor Herrity states, "John has epitomized the Rotary's motto "service above self" in every regard."**



Supervisor Kathy L. Smith Honors Karrie Delaney, Sully District

As chair of the Fairfax County Library Board of Trustees, Karrie Delaney was elected by her colleagues to lead the board in strategic planning, making key financial decisions, and managing the board. When the Fairfax County Library Director retired at the beginning of 2016, the responsibility fell to Karrie to manage and oversee the recruitment, interview, and vetting process for a new director. Karrie again demonstrated her value to library patrons when she began initiated a program to make Fairfax libraries engines for economic growth in our community. She recognized that our libraries can be utilized as makerspaces where entrepreneurs and inventors can collaborate on new products and ideas.

In addition to her work with the Library, Karrie was also responsible for advising the county in the best way to respond to emergencies as the Sully District Representative to the Citizen Corps Council, a community group aimed at promoting emergency preparedness at every level. As a parent of two young children, Karrie wants to make this community a safe home for all our children. **Supervisor Smith says "Karrie has been an excellent representative for Sully District on the Citizen Corps Council and on the Library Board of Trustees. I especially appreciate her passion for finding innovative ways to make libraries relevant as a tool of economic development in our communities."**



Chairman Sharon Bulova Honors John Wood, Fairfax County (no photo)

In 2014, John Wood took over a declining diner from a local couple who had owned the establishment for decades. In just a few years, he has revitalized the 29 Diner (Fairfax) into something much more than a vibrant and successful restaurant. John has donated countless hours of time, space and food at the 29 Diner and turned it in a conduit for nonprofit fundraising, while robustly serving the Fairfax community at the same time. He has also hosted community activities for the Meals Tax campaign and domestic violence awareness, as well as recognition events for first responders and local youth. During the Winter Holiday season, he led an effort, supporting Britepaths, to provide gifts to local needy children and meals for their families. John has made the 29 Diner not only a place for us to gather and enjoy a meal, but to support one another in times of need. John believes in the adage "To whom much is given, much is expected." He states his feeling of being blessed to own and operate the 29 Diner, and that he is heavily compelled to



give back to the community. ***Chairman Sharon Bulova, says, "John always opens his doors to fantastic causes. Our Fairfax community is better because of John's tireless work."***

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors presented the Community Champions with their well-deserved awards at the 25th Annual Volunteer Service Awards. Jeff Goldberg, Virginia Bureau Chief for ABC7/WJLA-TV and News Channel 8, returned as program emcee. Volunteer Fairfax is grateful for the generosity of the following event sponsors: Silver-Level FVCbank, and Bronze-Level sponsors Access National Bank, Capital One, Dominion, Eagle Ray, Leidos, NFP, Vinny & Ellen Sica, and Universal Title.

For more information about all 2017 Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards, visit www.volunteerfairfax.org.

About Volunteer Fairfax and the Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards

For more than 40 years, Volunteer Fairfax has mobilized people and resources to improve Fairfax County and the Washington Capital Region. The Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards were established in 1993 and serve as a community-wide celebration of volunteerism.

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