

For Immediate Release

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THE CAPE ANN YMCA 2017 ANNUAL COMMUNITY AWARDS HONOREES

Community Celebration will honor those who make an impact every day

Gloucester, MA - The Cape Ann YMCA invites you to its 2nd Annual Community Awards Celebration **Thursday, April 13, 2017** at 7:30 am at Cruiseport Gloucester, 6 Rose Square, Gloucester.

This year's honorees include five inspiring individuals who have made a significant impact on the Cape Ann community aligning with the Y's key areas of focus; **Youth Development, Healthy Living** and **Social Responsibility**. **NEW this year, the Y added the Mayor's Exemplary Youth Award**, recognizing children who may have overcome adversity or made a lasting impact on the Community.

Cape Ann Y Executive Director Tim Flaherty said, "This event is a great way for our Y to honor those people in Cape Ann who join us in our commitment to strengthening our community. Each recipient is a true testament to the power of the Cape Ann community and the importance of giving back."

This year's honorees include:

Youth Development Award: David Brooks, Cape Ann Art Haven/The Hive

Cape Ann Art Haven was founded in 2008 by 19-year-old Gloucester native David Brooks who noticed the arts were systematically being cut from schools and he wanted to do something about it. He left college to open a community art space where children could take art classes regardless of their ability to pay. Since opening, Art Haven has offered classes for kids and adults in pottery, clay building, darkroom photography, mural painting, painting, and drawing. In the summer of 2012, Cape Ann Art Haven expanded to include The Hive Community Center, a dynamic space with programming for teens and adults. For the last six years, Cape Ann Art Haven has experienced tremendous growth through community participation and support.

Healthy Living Award: Lara Lepionka, Backyard Growers

During the 2008 recession Lara Lepionka and her family tore out their postage stamp lawn and started an intensive urban micro-farm, feeding their family of four and creating a model for urban farming in Gloucester, MA. Having caught the gardening bug, Lara founded Backyard Growers in 2010 with a \$6,000 budget, helping a handful of families in her neighborhood start their own vegetable gardens. Her ultimate goal: creating lifelong gardeners inspired by the power of growing one's own food. She has developed Backyard Growers into a grassroots non-profit organization with an annual budget of over \$250,000.

Backyard Growers provides resources and support to establish vegetable gardens at homes, housing communities, non-profit organizations, and public schools, and offers accompanying programs and initiatives that promote a love of fresh, local produce.

Social Responsibility Award: Sal Zerilli, and the Trustees of Awesome Gloucester & Rockport

Since moving back to Cape Ann several years ago, Sal has spearheaded major community initiatives. His first was the film NO PRETTY PRAYER, an historic look at the families and life of The Fort section of Gloucester. Sal also led the charge to start both AWESOME GLOUCESTER and AWESOME ROCKPORT; these groups are part of the international Awesome Foundation and over the past 4 years have delivered close to \$50,000 for grassroots initiatives "to make our community even more awesome" in Gloucester and Rockport.

Mayor's Exemplary Youth Award: Brothers Charles and George King

Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken and Committee of the Arts Board Member Catherine Ryan announced that Gloucester has been awarded a statewide grant of \$6,620 from the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) to help with the conservation and historical education for a Civil War uniform coat. This grant was possible thanks to the hard work of brothers Charles and George King who led efforts across Gloucester to raise awareness through local media, fundraisers and the Awesome Gloucester program. Both Charles and George King joined Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken in late January for a conference call with Archivist Dr. Warner to reveal the grant award, which was the culmination of months of work for advocacy and awareness for the conservation project. "I'm proud of our city volunteers, students and residents who came together to help raise awareness for this American artifact that has history in our country and in our local community," said Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken. Plans to create an innovative and attractive display case are currently being developed.

The Cape Ann YMCA Community Celebration Awards are free and open to the public. Complimentary breakfast provided. For more information, please contact Brian Flynn at flynnb@northshoremca.org

About the Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. For over 150 years, the YMCA of the North Shore has been strengthening the foundations of community for the more than 40,000 members it serves in 25 cities and towns. We nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being and provide opportunities to give back and support our neighbors; regardless of age, race, ethnicity or socio-economic background.