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YWCA Annual “Women of Excellence” Luncheon on June 15 Earns Record-Breaking \$125,000 to Support Local Women and Children: *Col. Grace Link, Director of Staff, Missouri Air Guard, Speaks to Sell-Out Audience*

June 19, 2017 (St. Joseph, MO.): The St. Joseph YWCA’s annual event to honor outstanding women surpassed all previous years, generating approximately \$125,000 in donations, sponsorships and ticket sales on Thursday, June 15 at the Civic Arena in downtown St. Joseph. Funds generated from the event help the YWCA provide critical services across the community, including the Shelter for homeless or abused women and children; supported housing for families moving forward from abuse; programs for positive teen decision-making; childcare; and breast cancer education and prevention efforts.

More than 1,200 guests attended the Women of Excellence luncheon, a packed house on a day set aside to honor women in the community who have made an impact on the lives of those around them. Award nominees were named across seven designated categories, along with an Employer of Excellence and a Y Woman of Merit. One nominee from each category was selected as the Women of Excellence award recipient. As a highlight of the event, guests bid on special centerpiece gifts, and entrepreneur Steve Craig – the Centerpiece Challenge host and Platinum Plus sponsor – matched those funds. Surprises throughout the event included the announcement that every Future Leader nominee received an individual scholarship.

The Women of Excellence awards luncheon keynote speaker was Col. Grace Link, director of staff for the Missouri Air Guard. She serves as a senior advisor to the adjutant general and coordinates joint military function and formulates long-term strategic plans that support 2,300 airmen and women in Missouri. During her presentation, Col. Link shared photos from her personal career journey, including her service during deployment operations.

“Each moment of the Women of Excellence event recognizes the vision, courage and hard work every woman contributes across our community and throughout our region,” says Jean Brown, executive director, YWCA St. Joseph. “We simply cannot thank all of our sponsors, donors, volunteers, nominees, nominators and attendees enough. Each of them believes in our mission and helped us create an event with such a wonderful impact on the families we serve.”

Read more at www.ywcasi.org.

Below are the Women of Excellence award recipients for each category:

Lifetime Achievement Award – Workplace: Julia Schneider
Lifetime Achievement Award - Volunteerism: Dorothy Wenz
Woman in the Workplace: Cynthia Blakely
Woman in Volunteerism: Martha Drannan Clark
Emerging Leader: Natalie Maupin
Woman in Support Services: Angela Stone
Future Leader: Elizabeth Robinson
Employer of Excellence: St. Joseph Title
2017 Y Woman of Merit is Marcy Colescott

About the St. Joseph YWCA:

The St. Joseph YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Embraced by a community that has become intolerant of violence and disparities, the YWCA of St Joseph is the anchor institution for improving the lives of women and, in turn, enhancing the future for children in our community. For more information, visit www.ywcasj.org.